

LONDON SOCIETY.

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HOW THE SHAREHOLDERS' MONEY GOES.



means those which fill the columns of the 'Times' and the 'Telegraph,' but proceedings of which the outer world (and, indeed, many of those most nearly concerned in them) know really very little, and with which the newspaper reader would gain no familiarity even if he read every word of his great state oracle every day of the week.

The place from which we report is not the gallery above the Speaker, but a corner of Committee Room No. 8 of the House of Commons. If the reader has only visited the House with a Chamberlain's order, and has merely gone the round of ordinary sight-seers, he will need some little instruction how to find Committee Room No. 8. Our instructions accordingly are that he proceed thus:—Let him go down to the House between the hours of twelve and four on any of the first five week-days during the session. Let him enter by the door opposite the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, close this door very carefully behind him so as to make no noise, take off his hat as if he were in church, and proceed carefully across the top of Westminster Hall into the Statesman's Gallery just in front of him. If any one informs him that the large white marble statues on each side of this gallery are the 'statutes at large,' let him firmly disbelieve it. They are nothing of the kind. They are simply the statues—and very excellent statues too—of some of our great orators and patriots, long since gone mute. Note how Grattan, in the warm animation of

there be one phase of London Society with which London Society thinks itself more intimately acquainted than another, it is—thanks to the daily papers—probably that which those oracles are accustomed to describe as 'Proceedings in Parliament.' And when we say that on the present occasion we propose to occupy a few pages of 'London Society' in describing some of these proceedings, we shall seem to have undertaken a most unnecessary task unless we add at once that the proceedings with which we have now to do are not by any

debate, seems as if he would step off his pedestal and come down to you:—with what calm self-possession Burke uplifts one single finger, as if gently keeping time to some wonderful discourse:—how Pitt, the hard-headed, obstinate little man, stands fronting the colossal Fox, who, with arm uplifted and fist clenched, looks inclined to drive home his arguments by main force:—how the boyish figure of Falkland, leaning on his sword, has the sweet face lit up by a half-sorrowful smile:—what an invincible, fixed resolve is in the clear-cut features of Hampden as he, too, grasps the sword, with lips compressed. And having noted all these our visitor can, if he likes, pass forward and examine the frescoes close at hand. After which, still with his hat off, and still moving very noiselessly, let him ask the first policeman he sees where this passage leads, and where that passage leads, and that functionary will be pretty sure to respond by promptly ejecting him from the building and assuring him that he is an audacious intruder.

If the prospect of this result is not satisfactory, then, as an alternative mode of procedure, we advise our friend to put on an air of important business,—to press forward and let the doors shut behind him with a good slam,—above all, to keep his hat on and look like a man who knows where he is going and who wants to be there as quickly as possible. If, beyond this, he will be at the trouble of carrying in his hand a roll of foolscap or brief paper we have no doubt he will find it a passport to the most secret and hidden penetralia of the building. Indeed, he would be an unusually astute policeman who would object, at sight of such a talisman, to admit a man of average impudence to join the Lord Chancellor himself upon the very woollack. At any rate, he will be an unusually surly policeman who declines to point out the winding staircase beyond the telegraph office, &c., which leads to the long line of the Commons' Committee Rooms.

In fact, these rooms are open to the public, but as they are usually

crowded with those who have business there, the guardians of order naturally enough try to keep away those who go merely to loiter.

The long elegant corridor which stretches by the seemingly interminable suite of Committee Rooms, each of which opens into it, has its windows looking into the interior courts of the structure. In the recess of each window is a little desk, with inkstand, pens, &c., for the convenience of the many who spend here so much of their time. On each side of the corridor are benches, which a few hours' standing in a committee room often make acceptable enough to tired legs. Lounging about, or sauntering up and down, groups of men, for the most part engaged in earnest conversation, throng this corridor or passage all day long (that is, all that part of the day during which the committees are sitting, for within five minutes of their rising the passage is deserted).

The excitement which attends the lottery of a Parliamentary Committee Room, where the prizes are so splendid and the blanks so many, yet so obstinately disbelieved in, would be well shown if we could analyze these groups and show what manner of men they are who are thus drawn together. Here are barristers, solicitors, parliamentary agents, clerks, clergymen, men of the sword and men of the sea, secretaries and projectors of every description of joint-stock enterprise beneath the moon, owners of mines and collieries, iron-founders, noblemen and their agents, railway chairmen, railway directors, railway managers, railway engineers, railway shareholders (though not so many of these last as there ought to be). The railway element is strongest of all, for at least four-fifths of the 'Private Bills' which come before the committees are promoted by railway companies. Scarcely a mile of railway in Britain but you will find some one here able (if willing) to give you a free pass over it. Scarcely an engineer of any eminence but you are more likely to find him here than at his own office. To such men this corridor and the committee rooms themselves are as much a rendez-

vous as the Exchange is to the broker and the merchant. Nowhere else can you see so clearly all the enthusiasm which attends the spending of vast sums of money foolishly,—and this enthusiasm is, after all, the most wonderful of any. Hardly anywhere else have you a prospect of seeing so clearly with what earnestness men can go about their projects, and about their principal project of making money,—for where many spend some must also gather.

Amongst so heterogeneous an assemblage it would be odd indeed did we not find some black sheep, and such sheep are to be found here in flocks. The professional projector, the unprincipled schemer, the bubble-blower,—men who care absolutely nothing for the intrinsic merits of the projects they are advocating,—who know well enough indeed that they have no intrinsic merits;—but whose one object is to squeeze as much out of the scheme as possible and then throw it away like a sucked orange. Such are to be found here by dozens.

But we do not hesitate to say that here also is to be found the true outdoor parliament that manages the home affairs of England. All that is most distinguished in our country for energy, ability, and enterprise in commercial pursuits is well represented here. Here are to be found the men who keep the great industrial machine of Britain moving by their enterprise and their skill. It is they and such as they who have made English industry and English progress what it is. It is amongst these and such as these that we find the Stephensons, the Brunels, the Watts, the Arkwrights of to-day. They are the salt of a great hard-working, money-making, money-spending people.

And though we speak of them merely as an outdoor parliament we see amongst them no small number of our legislators both hereditary and elective. It is true that we do not, as a rule, meet here our great politicians and diplomatists, for this is not their place, though on occasions they, too, may be seen flitting up and down. But here we meet

day after day those Members of Parliament who have been sent up by their constituents not for their wonderful gifts of tongue, but for their proved ability at doing real hard work. Members who make, it may be, very poor speeches on reform bills, on party politics, or foreign affairs, and who have scant space allowed them in the 'Times;' but Members who can go through a bill that proposes to deal with millions of pounds, discuss it clause by clause, reconcile conflicting interests, discriminate between the scheme of the professional projector and the scheme that really supplies a national want, and give their prompt decisions honestly and justly. Such Members will sit five days a week through a long session, hearing often the dreariest of evidence on private bills, from eleven till four, then hurry away to prayers at the sound of the Speaker's bell, and scarcely ever fail to have their names in the list of votes, however late the division, or however tedious the debate. Happy are the constituents who are thus represented. As for the poor Members themselves, one scarcely sees *their* happiness so clearly.

It is time, however, that we leave the corridor and enter the Committee Room itself. And in doing so let us be specially careful to enter by the proper door. For each room has two doors—one for the entrance of the public, the other for the use of Members only. And many are the instances of utter discomfiture on the part of visitors who, entering by the wrong door, find themselves suddenly in the immediate, august presence of the committee itself, and as suddenly bundled out again by the offended clerk.

Most of these rooms are much alike in their general aspect. They look down upon the great silent highway of the penny boats, which are continually passing and repassing beneath the windows. And often, in hot weather, the odours which Father Thames sends up from his lucid waters are so overpowering that these windows have to be kept close shut.

Each room is divided about equally

by a low handrail running from side to side, and designed to separate those who are officially engaged upon the bill from the public and those who are merely interested in its fate. Outside the rail, therefore, there is merely standing room. Immediately inside it is a long table with seats for the barristers, solicitors, and chief promoters and opponents of the bill. But as this table does not extend quite across the room it leaves space for a few chairs and another table for the convenience of witnesses in waiting, or, indeed, of any one who chooses to push forward and make himself at home.

[And here I hope I may be allowed to pause from charitable motives, and drop a hint which I am sure will be gratefully received by my needy literary brethren. They will always find at this spare table a plentiful supply of the best of pens, ink, and paper (paper with embossed heading, 'House of Commons,' which is surely respectable), all of which they are free to use *ad libitum*, and no questions asked. The only deficiency, to which I would respectfully call the attention of the officers of the House, is that postage-stamps are not supplied also. But this, however, is merely within parentheses.]

Beyond this barristers' table and witnesses' table the room is sacred to the committee and its officers. There is a horseshoe table at which sits the committee itself;—the chairman in the convex centre and two other members on each side of him. The committees usually consist of five. The chairman is generally an experienced Member of the House—always a gentleman of thorough business capacity. The other four members (if we may venture to say it without fear of impeachment) as often as not contain amongst them gentlemen who know very little of, and care still less for, what is going on, and who leave themselves implicitly in the hands of their chairman with a confidence that is well deserved.

In the concave recess of the horseshoe is another small oblong table, on one side of which is a chair for the witness under examination [the

witness being examined in a chair, not in a box], and opposite to him sits the official reporter of the committee, who is a personage of sufficient importance to have a paragraph to himself.

He is invested with much more plenary powers than are given to the gentlemen in the gallery above the Speaker. There, if one does not catch what Lord Palmerston says, he is by no means allowed to interrupt his lordship and make him say it over again. But here our reporter in a similar emergency is allowed to interrupt counsel, witness, or committee until his notes are correct. He is, in fact, the recognized officer of the House, whose duty it is to take verbatim notes of the whole of the proceedings. These notes of his are referred to very frequently in the course of the proceedings, and what is found written there is held conclusive in cases of dispute. Probably some of the most rapid shorthand writers of the day are to be found in attendance on these committees—men who will write from two hundred to two hundred and fifty words per minute without any apparent exertion, and who will continue their work without relief from the time of the committee taking its seat to its rising again. Perhaps such a man might be very much out of his place as a reporter of the debates, where speed and endurance are by no means the only qualities that are requisite. But, on the other hand, the reporter from the gallery would be often quite as much out of place in the committee room. The committee's reporter has no scope whatever for the exercise of his genius, and not much for the exercise of his judgment. He is never worried with a classical quotation. It is no part of his duty to improve the eloquence of the counsel, to condense the verbosity of the witness or correct his grammar, to gloss over ugly mistakes, or add point to a pointless answer. His business is to photograph the proceedings as well as pen and stenography will do it. If a witness acquits himself well he may depend on finding his performance put down to his credit. If he makes himself an ass he is

equally sure to find himself written down one. Our reporter's chief difficulties are with figures, gradients, radii, and names of places of which he knows nothing (and of these he certainly does make sad work sometimes). He is not, as we implied, relieved at short intervals, as are the gentlemen of the gallery, but sits and writes for the committee all day. An attendant comes in quietly now and then and fetches away his note-book, replacing it with another. So that while he writes others are transcribing his notes, and others again are at work lithographing the transcript. Each morning, when the committee meets, there is ready for the members lithographed copies of the proceedings of the day previous, often filling several hundred sheets of brief paper. These lithographed documents are supplied also to the counsel, solicitors, promoters, opponents, and to all interested in the bill who are prepared to pay a good stiff price for them. So much can be done by combination and system which at first sight would seem impracticable.

The young gentleman who sits alone at the little side table is the only one whom we have yet to introduce to the reader. He is the 'committee clerk,' and his arduous duties consist chiefly in paring his nails and stretching his legs, to both of which employments he devotes himself with quite exemplary attention, and we hope he is liberally remunerated.

And now, having cleared the way by these preliminary notes, let it be supposed that we are promoters of a bill for a new line of railway from Malley-Vron in the county of Denbigh to Bryn-frood in Merionethshire. Our prospectus has already pointed out the inadequate railway accommodation of North Wales in general, and of the district which we propose to serve in particular. Our leading counsel, Serjeant Blarney, will enlarge upon these topics at greater length forthwith. For the present, suffice it to say, that having completed our surveys, we duly advertised our parliamentary notices in October and November

last in the county papers, and in the 'London Gazette.' We also, before the end of November, duly lodged our plans and specifications in the place appointed by the House. We duly deposited in the Bank of England eight per cent. on the amount of the share capital which we ask leave to raise. We have passed the trying ordeal of the standing orders' examiner. Leave has been given us to bring in our little bill. The committee of selection has appointed the committees of investigation—has grouped all the schemes before Parliament for the session, and we find ourselves remitted to the tender mercies of Lord Marmion, the member for East Bedford, who opens his inquiry this morning along with his honourable colleague, Mr. Slingsby (East Warwickshire), Sir William Chandler (Staley - Bridge), Mr. Waterfield (Clerkenwell), and Viscount Wygram (Llandaff).

Our bill is one of Group xii., a list of which hangs in the corridor, and may be read there on the usual notice board. It will be seen that the group embraces about a dozen different projects, all for railways in North Wales. But we have only to do with the first four of them. Our own bill is first on the list. The next three are rival schemes which aim jointly to fill up the same district which we wish to accommodate singly. These three schemes, therefore, are to be taken as substantially one. They are introduced separately that we may have three opponents instead of one, and in the hope that perhaps one of the three lines may pass, and so form a basis for further extensions hereafter.

Our respective positions, however, are all marked on a huge outline map, our scheme being marked No. 1., and our rivals No. 2, 3, and 4, as shown upon it.

Serjeant Blarney, of course, when he opened our case to 'My lords and gentlemen,' had a rod with which as he spoke he pointed out the several places which he named as they were shown upon this map hanging conspicuously on the wall.

He began by stating that never in the whole course of his parla-

mentary experience had it been his happiness—he thought he might almost add, never had it been the happiness of ‘any other man’—to lay before a committee a scheme which was able to stand so entirely on its own merits, and which needed so little encomium or explanation from him as the scheme which he now begged to introduce to their notice. He should, indeed, feel that he was offering an insult to the judgment of the committee if he dwelt on the advantages of the line which he had the honour to advocate, otherwise than in the most cursory manner. Gentlemen of the bar, he knew, did not always get credit for superfluous modesty in the acceptance of their honorarium; but certainly when he received his brief and saw the liberal retaining fee which was marked upon it he had said to himself, ‘Now am I justified in taking this case up, where my services are really not wanted, and where the bill could hardly fail to pass without a word said, or a witness called in its favour?’* He assured the committee that he had felt these serious scruples of conscience at undertaking a work which he felt to be, if they would allow the use of the metaphor, a gilding of refined gold, and an adding of perfume to—certainly he could scarcely compare a railway bill to a violet, but he might say to—a scheme which was already in perfectly good odour.

Briefly, then, he would say, that the line which his clients, whom he was sure he was hardly premature in already calling the North Cymry Railway Company, proposed to construct was to be of the length of about 52 miles. The capital, which they proposed to raise by shares, was 500,000*l.*, and the further amount which they proposed to borrow was 166,667*l.* With these sums and the increased value of surplus property which they might have to dispose of hereafter he anticipated that they

* The solicitor certainly did hint that the learned serjeant objected to receive his brief, which was marked two hundred guineas. But he added that the objection was no longer made when this was altered to two hundred and fifty guineas.

would have so considerable a surplus fund on hand that it was not improbable the company would, in a few years, come again for powers to construct one or two short branches without asking for any additional capital whatever. At present, however, the feeling of the gentlemen who had subscribed the share list was, that they should put their undertaking at once and for ever out of the way of pecuniary embarrassment, and so he asked for power to raise a capital somewhat larger than the amount for which it was absolutely certain the line would be constructed. [Here Mr. Phibber, Q.C., the leader on one of the rival schemes, shakes his head and says, ‘Oh, oh!’ mournfully.]

He overheard his learned friend groaning, and saw that he was shaking his head in a way that must be dangerous for the fine ideas which were inside it, if, indeed, it did not quite addle them. But he could easily understand that his learned friend must feel painfully the contrast that he saw in the projects which they respectively advocated.

The town of Malley-Vron, as was already within the knowledge of the committee, though at present destitute of railway accommodation, would soon (independent of the schemes now waiting their decision) no longer be so. The line to it from Pont-Uyn was already nearly completed by the Grand Trunk Company. The question now at issue, therefore, was by whom, and by what route should the railway system be extended southward into the principality. And he had no wish to keep back the fact that this again was not merely a question between two or three small companies. For though his clients were perfectly independent, they did not wish to conceal that they were in close alliance with the Great Southern Company, and that they designed their line to be worked by that company, and in that company’s interest. On the other hand, the three rival schemes with which they were met, were avowedly Grand Trunk schemes, and supported by Grand Trunk capital. The committee would find, therefore, that prac-

tically the issue which they had to decide was, whether the territory of North Wales was to be handed over to the Grand Trunk Company, whose main lines were palpably inconvenient for connection with it, and who wanted it merely from a grasping dog-in-the-manger policy; or whether it was to be confided to the care of the Great Southern Company, whose lines already embraced nearly all its borders, and whose natural interests were already bound up with those of the district they sought to serve.

He was not there, however, to advocate Great Southern interests or Great Southern policy, but would address himself to the consideration of their project as a local line. And first he would ask the committee to consider the urgent necessity there was of giving an outlet southward to the rapidly developing trade of the town of Malley-Vron, which outlet his clients proposed to give first by a junction with the Great Southern line at Llangwfil, and, second, by their main line to Brynffrood. He would call witnesses to prove how greatly the want of such an outlet was felt locally, and how seriously it affected the commercial interests of the rapidly rising town which they had selected as their starting terminus,—if he might be allowed to make the palpable bull so common in railway phraseology of calling a starting-point a terminus. He would also call witnesses who had embarked large sums of money in the great industrial works which existed along the route which they proposed to take. He would call the proprietor of the immense and well-known brick and tile works of Eyton-Brymbo, who was at present, for want of means of transport, compelled to make his trade comparatively a local one. He would call the owners of the great iron-ore works of Msesy-unwin and Ebbw-Wern. He would call the noble proprietor of the world-renowned slate quarries of Llan-y-frog, and Savan-y-Rhyg, of which the committee had heard so much.

Lord Marmion here interrupts the learned serjeant to say he has never in his life heard of any of these

places. Viscount Wygram looks much relieved at this, he having apparently begun to fear that somehow he has overlooked a most important district of country.

Serjeant Blarney asked if anything could possibly strengthen his case more than this remark of his lordship's. Here were the teeming industries and the busy populations of the places which he had named going on year after year increasing in numbers, in extent, and in value, and yet so entirely were they isolated from the rest of the world for want of that railway accommodation, which had become to commerce as vital as the air we breathe is to ourselves, that even his lordship had to this day never heard of them. After such a testimony he would leave the local case, as regarded these towns, in the hands of the unimpeachable witnesses whom he should have the honour to call before the committee. There was, however, still the town of Malla with its famous lakes, and their southern terminus Brynffrood, both places dear to all tourists, and which it was the object of his clients to make accessible to many thousands who otherwise might never see them. For he was sure the committee would agree with him, that however charming to those with plenty of time and plenty of money might be the idea of pedestrian excursions in this beautiful country of North Wales, there were a vast majority who had but scant leisure and shallow purses, and with whom considerations touching their poor feet and their poor pockets must always have great weight, and whose love of the beauties of nature, and whose finer feelings could only—

'Shut that door,' roars Lord Marmion.

Mr. Wigsby, our junior, takes advantage of this interruption to make one or two remarks to the learned serjeant. His lordship enters into a private conversation, apparently of a jocular tendency, with Sir Wm. Chandler. Two or three other members of the committee who have been much engaged with sherry and sandwiches become suddenly interested in the proceedings, their

attention being aroused by the cessation of the sound of the serjeant's voice. The learned serjeant takes breath, and also snuff, and waits very patiently till the noble chairman says, 'Now, Mr. Blarney, where had you got us to?'

The learned serjeant never finishes that eloquent sentence on which he was engaged, but starts a new theme. He had, he said, been given to understand that his learned friends on the opposite side, with a valour worthy of a better cause, intended to raise objections to the length of tunneling which his clients proposed to construct on the route of their railway. They proposed also, he was told, to take similar objections to certain proposed gradients and radii. But he hoped this was not correct, as he should much regret that the time of the committee should be taken up to so little purpose. At the same time, he should feel it necessary to have engineering evidence ready of a character quite unimpeachable.

Then perhaps he might be expected, before he sat down, to say something regarding the three rival schemes which were put forward as an alternative to the project he had the honour of advocating. But really he waited in dumb amazement to hear first by what possible flight of imaginative genius anything could be said in their favour. He was disarmed from attack, not because he found no point of attack, but because he could see no possible defence. He felt that if he spoke against these poor abortions, he should be doing a no more valiant act than to push down a decrepit old man, or to strike a man who was down already. He would merely point out the nature of the country which these lines proposed to traverse. Why, gentlemen, it might be doubted whether it could ever be said of it with truth, that 'every rood of ground maintained its rat,' so barren was it and uninhabited. It was a district in which there was no traffic to carry and no passenger to travel. It was probably this latter consideration which had weighed with the projectors in drawing up their schemes. If they had thought it at

all probable that they would ever have a passenger to carry, his friends would never have come before Parliament with a route made up of petty junction-lines over which no one of the three applying companies would have power to work a through train. It was clear, however, that the contingency of a passenger presenting himself who wanted to go from one end of the route to the other had been thought so remote, that it was not worth while providing for it.

'In conclusion,' says the learned serjeant (and thereupon his lordship, the chairman, looks pleased), 'I feel that it is quite unnecessary for me to enlarge upon the shameless manner in which these three vexatious and senseless projects have been intruded on the legislature, but I will just remark—'

And now Lord Marmion looks very sad again. For his lordship knows, from long experience, that when a learned serjeant says he find it 'quite unnecessary to enlarge,' that learned serjeant is just about to enlarge at very great length indeed. So his lordship lays himself back in his chair, folds his arms, and waits with resignation. And Serjeant Blarney finds so many matters on which he considers it quite unnecessary to enlarge, and he really does enlarge upon them all to that degree, that when at last he sits down, the committee instantly rises up. In fact, our serjeant, who begins by saying he has nothing to say, occupies exactly the whole of the first day in saying it, so it is evident how little even of the outline of his arguments is given here.

'We meet again at eleven to-morrow,' says the chairman, as we all put away our papers, and disperse with as much noise as a pack of urchins leaving school.

Punctually as the clock strikes eleven on the morrow, the chairman steps into the room, as if he had been waiting at the door, and business is resumed at once by the examination of witnesses on our behalf.

Our first witness is the proprietor of extensive coal mines, which will be well accommodated by our scheme, and which are at present without



HOW THE SHAREHOLDERS' MONEY GOES.

A RAILWAY BATTLE AT ST. STEPHEN'S, WESTMINSTER.

railway accommodation of any kind. The question of getting a railway to his collieries is to this gentleman a question probably of quadrupling his trade within a year or two. The number of men whom he employs; the amount he pays in weekly wages; the number of tons of coal which he raises per annum; the limited districts to which he supplies this coal; the number of men whom he *could* employ, and the number of tons which he could raise and sell if he had the means of railway transit;—all this is elaborately brought out, and perhaps a trifle exaggerated. All his evidence, of course, is as strongly in our favour as he knows how to make it, and cross-examination does not materially shake it.

After him we have the brick and tile makers, the iron-ore people, several large landed proprietors (a real duke amongst them), corn-factors, provision merchants, an agricultural machine-maker, a hotel-keeper, a grocer, a chemist, a gentleman farmer or two, a brewer, even a clergyman, owners of stone quarries, with many others of trades, professions, callings, and stations, too various to mention. But as these local witnesses are rarely either examined or cross-examined at any great length, they are turned off pretty rapidly, and do not attract much attention. Local evidence, indeed, though sometimes the most valuable of any, is always considered as merely preliminary to the sort of evidence on which the fighting takes place. We get through the whole of our rural magnates on the second day, and we do not consider it necessary to give any of their evidence in detail here.

We open the third day with our scientific evidence. First we call our local engineer, who has laid out the line. He speaks to the extremely practical nature of the route which he has selected. He admits that there is a gradient of 1 in 46, and another of 1 in 30; but they are only short, and the engines will be specially adapted to the working of them. There are also one or two sharp curves, but not sharper than many which he knows to have been worked with safety for years on

other lines. There is about three miles of tunneling, but the rocks are of an extremely soft nature, and will be easily worked. In fact, he has the strongest possible opinion as to the general simplicity and economy of all our arrangements.

Then follows Professor Rock, the eminent geologist, who speaks very learnedly of strata, and deposits, and secondary and tertiary formations, and trap, and alluvium, and who thinks the tunnels will be made very cheaply. In cross-examination, he admits that his own property, which happens to be in the neighbourhood, will probably be increased in value by the proposed line; but he gives his evidence entirely on public grounds, and has not been biased by personal considerations.

After the professor, we bring up one of our great guns, Mr. Bowler, C.E., the eminent consulting engineer of several large companies. He has given evidence on a thousand projects; and is known to the committee as a very cool hand indeed, and a thoroughly clever fellow, though perhaps rather slow to see any merit at all in the scheme of a rival company or a rival engineer.

Examined by Serjeant Blarney, he says he is well acquainted with the district proposed to be traversed (we wonder, indeed, with what district he is not well acquainted). He has been over the route of the proposed line, and he thinks it eminently a practical one. He thinks the local engineer is perhaps a little too sanguine in saying that it can be worked when made at 44'60 per cent. He himself should say it could hardly be worked for less than 45'70; that is, his estimate is full one half per cent. above that of his friend. With this exception, he agrees substantially with all the engineering evidence which has previously been given.

Cross-examined by Mr. Phibber, Q.C. *Has* had a day's shooting in the neighbourhood of the proposed line: has had several days' shooting, in fact, and hopes to have several more. That is *not* all he meant when he said he had been over the route proposed to be taken by the projected railway: probably the learned counsel's

friends have mistaken his theodolite for a gun. He meant to say that he has made a careful, scientific survey of the route, and that it has his thorough approval. Does not call to mind having given evidence of a directly contrary nature two years ago when the Grand Trunk introduced a scheme for a line to serve almost the identical country now in question. May possibly recollect if an extract be given him from his former evidence. Is quite sure that the slip of paper now placed in his hands contains no portion of his evidence. Is certain of this without reading it, because he knows he always has given his evidence in English, and this seems to be Latin.

Mr. Phibber looks puzzled, and Mr. Greenish, his junior, is seen to redden.

'Allow me,' says the noble chairman, taking the slip from the witness:—

*'Es mercatorum mercatores fortunatum
Atque filia pulcherrima bonisque donatum
Cui nomen fuit Dns annos sexdecim habenti
Cum opibus permultis auri et argenti?'*

'Some of your friends, I think, Mr. Phibber, have been pursuing their classical studies, and have handed in, by mistake, a document which does not seem materially to bear upon the question.'

There is a hearty laugh, in which the committee and all join. Mr. Greenish finds the proper document and tears up his translation. Mr. Bowler, though now clearly convicted, is too experienced to be much abashed at a slight contradiction. He blandly asks to be reminded *what he was trying to prove* on the former occasion. He easily explains away his former evidence, and Mr. Phibber takes very little by his motion.

When Mr. Bowler is dismissed, our next witness, one of the managers of the Great Southern Company, whom we intend to examine at great length, is not forthcoming. Serjeant Blarney asks 'leave to call a short witness out of order.'

The chairman hopes that in this case 'a short witness' does not mean an irrelevant witness, as he often finds such witnesses are introduced

to kill time when the right man is not at hand.

Some laughter arises when our 'short witness' proves to be, as is natural, and, indeed, necessary for the consistency of the joke, a very tall man.

Whether his evidence be relevant or not, he certainly is not considered of sufficient importance to be examined by Serjeant Blarney himself, so that learned gentleman hands him over to Mr. Wigsby, and saunters out into the corridor, into the refreshment room, into the next committee—takes a stroll, in fact, for the remainder of the day.

The 'short witness,' with Mr. Wigsby's assistance, contrives to hold out for an hour, by which time it is nearly four o'clock and the committee again adjourns.

The fourth day sees us all hard at work again, and the missing railway manager of the day before gives evidence which occupies the entire day. He is, in fact, so glib of tongue, and pours out such volumes of answers to the briefest questions, that he works the reporter very hard indeed. He is ready with all manner of rates and statistics of traffic. He can tell the committee the number of miles between any two points in the kingdom by the very shortest route. He knows to a nicety the extent of traffic which will be furnished by every manufacturer on the route of the proposed line. He knows exactly how much it will be worth to us, and how much to his own company. Consequently, he can also say what is the very lowest rate at which he can convey it, and he names a rate so low, that his company seem to be actuated entirely by motives of public philanthropy. He is the most fluent of witnesses, with a head like a Babbage's calculating machine. And when Mr. Phibber comes to cross-examine him, we see that those two gentlemen approach each other as warily as a couple of wrestlers. They have all manner of feints and inuendoes and civil palaver before they really come to open struggling. And when at length Mr. Phibber finds, from receiving two or three severe falls, that the witness really

is a great deal too strong for him, he gives up the attempt to shake his evidence, and leaves him master of the field with a mental resolve that he will damage him all he can on the morrow.

For the morrow begins, we having completed *our* case, with Mr. Phibber's opening speech on behalf of project number two, for which he is leading counsel. And of course he makes it his principal business to comment unfavourably on the opening speech of Serjeant Blarney, and on the utter failure (so he calls it) of our evidence to support that speech. He had had the misfortune, he said, to be engaged in another room for great part of the day on which that speech was made, and had therefore been deprived—a deprivation in which he was sure the committee would sympathize with him—of the pleasure of listening to the eloquence of the learned serjeant so uninterruptedly as he could have wished. They all knew to what heights his learned friend was accustomed to soar on these occasions; how he disdained to found his arguments on the mere, base ground of sordid facts and figures, but always winged his flight upward and far away into

* Regions mild of calm and serene air,*

and built his structures there to his own entire satisfaction. He had been informed, however, that on this particular occasion his learned friend had quite surpassed himself. He had not been content to accompany those delightful fictions, with which, *suo more*, he charmed the committee, in this instance with even his usual narrow basis of rationality. He had quite spurned that description of sense which is called *common*, and therefore it was not to be wondered, &c., &c., and so on, for a good hour by the chairman's watch.

Then leaving the subject of the learned serjeant's powers of imagination, he went to that of his powers of vituperation. Though unhappily he had missed those flowers of rhetoric to which he had alluded, it had been, he scarcely knew whether he should say his fortune or his mis-

fortune, to be present in time to be visited with the expression of his learned friend's indignation. The committee would remember how upon his devoted head were poured expressions of a nature which it would be very painful to him to repeat, and how his clients had been stigmatized as unprincipled adventurers for whom the hulks would be almost too good.

The chairman: 'Well, well, Mr. Phibber, you have survived it, and we have now the pleasure of hearing you.'

Mr. Phibber was thankful that he *had* survived it. But he assured the committee that when he went home that evening, he had covered his face with his robe and prepared for the less happy result which he feared was imminent. His clients, too, had held a meeting at which they were with difficulty dissuaded from leaving their country, so keen had been their sense of the withering scorn of his learned friend. One of the three schemes now to be introduced to the committee, was, as they knew, commonly spoken of as 'the suspended line,' from its having been before Parliament once or twice before, and postponed under peculiar circumstances. Well, a grimly facetious sketch had been handed round in which this 'suspended line' was represented as being of hemp, with a gibbet for one terminus, and its projector for the other. He feared this was scarcely an exaggeration of the feeling entertained towards his clients and their allies by the gentlemen whom they had the unhappiness of meeting as opponents. But from the committee he was sure of much more gentle consideration and much more comfortable handling than that at which the satirical artist hinted so grimly.

And, next, Mr. Phibber addressed himself to the demolition of our witnesses, all of whom he took in detail. Our traders were all petty shopkeepers. Our great landowners were mushrooms of yesterday. Our great employers of labour were, he feared, only great *in posse* and not *in esse*. Our engineers were charlatans. Our practical allies, the

managers of the neighbouring large company, were, he feared, gentlemen who would not strain either at gnats or camels or the Berwyn mountains themselves; and he thought that one of them, at any rate (the one from whom he had tried so long and so vainly to obtain any satisfactory answers) had—he would not say shown peculiar powers of hard swearing—but had certainly exhibited a lively faith in the credulity of the committee.

And then Mr. Phibber begins his eulogium of his own project, which in the course of other two hours' time he makes out to be all that Serjeant Blarney's scheme is not, and all that any scheme ought to be. He enumerates the witnesses whom he will call, and the irresistible evidence which they will give. He has indeed only got well into his brilliant peroration when the remorseless chairman rises;—the honourable committee put on their honourable hats; and Mr. Phibber, without being in the least disconcerted, packs up his papers, as, indeed, we all do.

It is actually four o'clock again. The fifth day's (and the first week's) proceedings are ended. It is Friday night. Members, counsel, witnesses—everybody, is off to his home, perhaps in the neighbouring suburb—perhaps five hundred miles away. But at home, at any rate, we can spend Saturday and Sunday, if only we can be back again on Monday by eleven o'clock.

It would be but a vain repetition for me to continue and relate in any detail how the investigation drags its slow length along through the second week and beyond it. Suffice it that Mr. Phibber calls, in support of his scheme, landowners, colliery owners, corn-factors, traders, engineers, and railway managers even like unto ours,—but, as he declares, more unimpeachable and of far greater weight. Two days more are taken up with their examination and cross-examination. Then Sir Thomas Wobbley, the leader on project number three opens his case, and being a modest man, and having providentially a slight impediment in his speech, he is content with an

oration of about three hours. He also takes up only about one day more with his witnesses. And on the afternoon of the ninth day Serjeant Wrangler rises to advocate project number four, which is the last with which we have in this inquiry anything to do. He does not, however, finish his speech till the next morning, and when the evening of the tenth day comes he has only got two or three of his local witnesses turned off. And so ends the second week of this investigation.

The first two days of the third week finish Serjeant Wrangler's case. And on the morning of the thirteenth day our old friend Serjeant Blarney once more rises to have his second innings, and give a final reply to his antagonists.

Would the reader like to hear another speech from the learned serjeant? We have copious notes of it here, and can oblige him if needful. But we decide to withhold it. Eloquence of learned serjeants and Q.C.'s is undoubtedly good;—but, after all, it is perhaps not the very best. We leave, therefore, to the reader's imagination to conceive all the learned orator's indignation, all his surprise, all his incredulity, all his inability to comprehend, all his convictions that he must have misunderstood this and not rightly heard that—in fact, all his utter despair at the retrogression of the human race if his own scheme does not receive the sanction of the intelligent committee, and if the schemes of his opponents do receive it.

When the learned serjeant has thus emptied himself of all his pent-up feelings (which takes a long time), he sits down and refreshes himself copiously with snuff, passing on the box to Mr. Phibber, who also helps himself in the most amicable manner.

The noble chairman at once says that the committee will consider their decision with closed doors, and we all clear out into the corridor to wait the verdict of the great quintumvirate.

Some trifling bets are made as to the result while we wait outside. But, on the whole, we wait patiently,

and without much excitement. In about an hour the chairman's bell rings, and then we all rush in with excitement and eagerness enough. As soon as silence is obtained the chairman reads very distinctly and deliberately the decisions which have been arrived at:—

'As regards Bill No. 1, the committee find that the preamble is not proved.

'As regards Bill No. 2, the committee find that the preamble is not proved.

'As regards Bill No. 3, the committee find that the preamble is not proved.

'As regards Bill No. 4, the committee find that the preamble is not proved.'

Our surprise is very great; but there is no doubt that we have heard aright. We had been sure that one or other of us must win, and we are all told in so many words that *none of us*, and none of our railways, are wanted or will be accepted:—that those philanthropic preambles of ours which begin with 'Whereas, the making and maintaining of [our respective railways] will be of great public benefit and advantage' are altogether mendacious, and that we had better go about our business. And about our business accordingly we do go, reflecting for our consolation that if we had got our bills it is still very doubtful whether we should ever have made our railways, and that, as we have not got them, we can, nevertheless, come again next session, and fight the battle afresh, perhaps before a less Rhadamanthine chairman. At any rate there is at present nothing left for us to do but to pay the piper.

And how much does the reader suppose the piper will charge for this entertainment? There is our learned serjeant's retaining fee of two hundred and fifty guineas, and his daily refresher of ten guineas. There is Mr. Wigsby's retainer of seventy-five guineas and his daily refresher of ten. There are our solicitors' bills;—our parliamentary agents' bills;—our witnesses' fees, varying from ten guineas to fifty guineas apiece and upwards;—there

are our fees to officers of the house;—our hotel expenses, our printing and advertising expenses:—in fact, we shall consider ourselves let off cheaply if we get over the present application for less than four thousand pounds, while our three antagonists will, amongst them, no doubt have to disburse about double that amount. All this is cast into the great gulf where the bodies of abortive projects lie for ever, and which yawns for ever for fresh prey.

'Where does the money come from?' That is our secret. Perhaps the deposits paid upon the shares bear the brunt of it. Perhaps our neighbours the Great Southern Company guaranteed us our parliamentary expenses, as the Grand Trunk guaranteed our opponents'. We must decline to make any positive statement on this subject. All we say is that it is *shareholders' money*, and shareholders' money is well known to be nobody's money.

Leaving, then, these suppositions projects, whose progress we have tried to describe, we are prepared to be charged with exaggeration and to meet the charge. We admit that such schemes as we describe partake of the nature of bubble schemes. But when we consider that there were last session 230 separate bills introduced into Parliament, nearly all of them by railway companies, it would not be hard to find some dozen amongst them of whom we might say

'Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.'

To say that such a description would in any way apply to all the inquiries into private bills would be simply absurd. It would be a scandal not on the legislative body only, but on the entire nation, were not the great proportion of committee business of a vastly different nature, and vastly more honourable and more profitable. But we put forward most prominently the foolish scheme and the scheme got up merely to enrich lawyers, projectors, and contractors, because it is this real scandal which most requires abatement. And no session ever

passes in which such projects are not brought forward, debated as unnecessarily and extravagantly, and money spent as profligately, as in the scheme we have imagined.

When two large companies go to loggerheads with each other there seems to be no limit to their extravagance and their insane rivalry. We will take one actual case from the business of the last session, which will show that, had we chosen, we might have filled our paper with it instead of imagining one.

The most exciting, and probably the most expensive contest of the session, was that known to railway people as the 'Andover and Redbridge contest.' Neither Andover nor Redbridge are places of very great fame; but had they been a new Liverpool and Manchester suddenly discovered, the possession of the railway that is now being constructed to connect them could not have been more eagerly contested than in the battle that was fought between the Great Western Company and the South-Western Company.

The inquiry before Mr. Adair involved the fate of seven bills. One of these was a bill promoted by the Andover and Redbridge Company itself to obtain power to raise an additional 15,000*l.* to complete their railway. The next three were Great Western projects: one to take a lease of the Andover and Redbridge Railway; another to make branches from Redbridge into Southampton; the third to make a new railway from Andover to Newbury on the line of the Great Western Railway. The effect of the last three bills would have been to give the Great Western Company an independent route from London and the rest of their line to Southampton, and deprive the South-Western of its present lucrative monopoly.

In opposition to these bills the South-Western promoted one for securing the Andover and Redbridge to themselves by means of certain new junctions, &c. And in further retaliation for the attempted inroad on their territory they carried the war home into the enemy's quarters; and as the Great Western had

tried to get to Southampton, so the South-Western tried to get to Bristol by making 43 miles of new railway at a cost of upwards of a million pounds. Lastly, to weaken the chance of the South-Western getting this last bill, the Great Western put forward a project for a railway in the Bristol district to be made by them (from Radstock to Keynsham, 15 miles), at a cost of 213,000*l.* Altogether these schemes involved the spending of about two million pounds, supposing the lines to be made within the estimated cost.

For thirty-five days did Mr. Adair's committee continue its investigation into these bills. Every man of local influence who could be got to come forward was examined on one side or other. Amongst the landowners we see that Lord Palmerston was a witness,—his Romsey estates lying on the contested route. All the mayors of the district—including the Mayor of Southampton and the Lord Mayor of London—engineers, managers, secretaries, every man of railway experience who could be thought to have weight with the committee:—all were marshalled on one side or the other by the ablest counsel who could be had for money. And the end of it all was that the preambles of six out of these seven bills were declared to be not proved, the only bill that passed being that for raising an additional 15,000*l.* to finish the railway of the Andover and Redbridge Company.

The effect of such contests of course is shown by rapidly decreasing dividends. When the end of the first half-year of 1862 arrived the Great Western Company divided amongst their fortunate proprietary the sum of five shillings per cent., with an admission that the parliamentary expenses of the session had not yet been charged against revenue. What the expenses of this contest really were shareholders probably will never know. Speculation varies from 15,000*l.* a side to double that amount. But as Lord Mayor Rose has been elected for Southampton on a distinct pledge to bring the broad gauge into that town, if possible, the contest may be renewed by-and-by; the share-

holders will then have another chance of learning how much it costs, and may possibly be called upon to hand their five shillings per cent. back again to make up the deficiency of revenue on a line which once paid eight per cent. with a good surplus.

That bubble schemes should be brought forward session after session is, we suppose, a necessary consequence of the permanence of human gullibility. So long as needy secretaries, professional witnesses, professional projectors, and gambling contractors can be found to puff a bubble into existence (and that will doubtless be as long as the moon endureth), so long will shareholders no doubt rush forward and entreat the bubble-blowers to take their gold and play at ducks and drakes with it. This undoubtedly does seem to be a necessity of human nature. The pleasure of being cheated is one which we cannot and will not give up.

But that old-established companies with abundant traffic to develop should exceed the wildest follies of these bubble schemes does not seem to be by any means so necessary; and it will be a happy day for many thousands who have invested their little all in these undertakings when legislative restraint is brought to bear on and to curb such excesses as that of the 'Andover and Redbridge contest.'

The march of legislation in railway matters goes on at railway speed. Since the preceding pages were written there have been other and more recent contests as keen and as profligate as that we have last mentioned. The session of 1863 saw 258 new bills lodged in Parliament, of which 130 were passed, authorizing the construction of nearly 800 miles of new railway, and the raising of twenty-three millions of new capital. The most memorable contest of the session was that on the scheme of the ambitious Chatham and Dover for a new line from London to Brighton, which, after about forty days of inquiry, the committee decided they must please to do without. This year, however, they come forward

again with the same scheme, and the battle has to be fought anew.

Large as was the number of bills deposited last year, it is this year considerably increased, there being as many as 336 new acts asked for. Of these no fewer than twenty-five are projects for the construction of subterranean gridirons for London itself, for which the promoters ask leave to raise in the aggregate the modest trifle of sixty-four million pounds. In connection with these the most sanguinary contests may with confidence be looked for. The merits and demerits of Messrs. Fowler and Hawkshaw in their rival schemes will be trumpeted with no uncertain sound by learned sergeants and Q.C.'s. All who have a taste for such refreshment may walk up to St. Stephen's any day, sure that they will be privileged to drink in the eloquence of Serjeant Merewether, of Mr. Denison, of Mr. Hope Scott, pure and fresh as it flows from those perennial fountains—

'Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.'

Householders along the line of the Euston and Marylebone Roads already complain of fearful underground rumblings and vibrations, of horrible dancings of their crockery, of difficulty in shutting doors and windows, of difficulty even in shutting their own eyes at night; and though it is possible that some of these complaints are exaggerated, it is still certain that if half the projects for metropolitan railways now before Parliament are carried out, London will for some years to come be hardly habitable. We shall not for a long time know which of our public buildings is not having its foundation sapped, or which of our main streets is not trembling to its fall. The business, not of these London railways only, but of railway legislation generally, is one that needs to be dealt with at once by a strong hand, and a prompt one. And the sooner it is so dealt with the better will it be for all of us, but more especially for such amongst us as have found out by sad experience 'How the Shareholders' money goes.'

R. H.

AN ACTOR'S STORY.



'I can't do it, Charley; I really cannot. It is as much as I can do to keep my head above water' (the continual performance of this aquatic feat is the normal condition of managers); 'and what with the heavy expenses for the coming burlesque, between paying for the puns, and paying for the paint, I must end in taking the benefit of the Act as the only benefit I can get,' he added, with a bitter humour.—Page 210.

I COMMENCED in a very humble walk of my profession—very humble indeed. For a considerable period I did simply nothing but announce 'The dinner waits!' and so introduce a brilliant assemblage to the festivity of gilt goblets, and all the (pasteboard) rarities of the season, or I formed a unit in the crowd of villagers who are intensely happy at the prospect of a ballet, and take a delighted interest in things in general, always giving expression to their feelings in a singularly unanimous fashion. From this I was promoted to carrying a letter, and was sometimes intrusted with half a speech: this latter piece of good luck was, however, confined to those

occasions when I acted valet to the hero; and I was nearly always interrupted in the midst of my modest address by the usual phrases expressive of dramatic impatience, which, though effective in a stage point of view, are neither flattering nor agreeable to the individual at whom they are flung. In short, I did all those menial offices which, however necessary, and demanding an infinite amount of patience, do not command large remuneration. But by perseverance, by studying good models, by reading carefully, avoiding all kinds of intemperance, and paying the strictest attention to my business, I got, after some time, into fair remunerative employment

as a comedian. My ambition was to become first rate, and though, for myself, I must say, I used every exertion to attain that desirable end, I found I had not talent enough. Well, though I could not be 'Caesar,' I couldn't at all afford to be 'nullus,' and so I fell into my proper place without grumbling or jealousy, and for several years took the leading light comic parts at various minor theatres. Having thus made my bow, as it were, I will proceed to tell my little story.

One morning I was seated in the manager's room of the — Theatre. The season was just about half over, and superior 'star' attractions at other houses, and more especially the gorgeous scenery of one, had diminished our receipts beyond all precedent. As a very natural consequence, the manager was not in good humour. He had just fought with the premiere danseuse, and cursed a drunken supernumerary who had the previous night suspended one of the finest effects in a melodrama by falling dead out of time; then there was the stage carpenter, who insisted on money to mend his wings and balance his flies; and to crown misfortune, there was the leader of the orchestra after, angrily complaining of his 'cues' being so altered and inverted by some of the performers, that it was impossible for him to bring in his music properly. In fact, I could scarcely have selected a more inopportune occasion for the success of my delicate mission—that of demanding an increase of salary. I use the word demand, because it was understood between us that if I undertook a part in a new piece I should be further remunerated over and above the stipulated wage. It was under this circumstance I now came to him.

—'I can't do it, Charley; I really cannot. It is as much as I can do to keep my head above water' (the continual performance of this aquatic feat is the normal condition of managers); 'and what with the heavy expenses for the coming burlesque, between paying for the puns, and paying for the paint, I must end in taking the benefit of the Act as the

only benefit I can get,' he added, with a bitter humour.

'Well,' said I, 'but you know this new piece, "Blessed Confederates," is drawing — drawing.' Here I caught his eye, and stopped, for my sense of the ludicrous was not equal to its expression of mingled astonishment at what he considered my coolness, and rage at what he conceived inappropriate chaffing. He swallowed his anger, however, and replied, with a sneer—

'Yes, drawing indeed; but a draft payable on order, and by admission at sight.'

'Come, now, Raynor,' I put in, 'we are better off than we were a week since, and if we can only keep the "Blessed Confederates" on for a few nights longer, it may revive the Treasury.'

'Read that,' was his only reply: and he flung me a letter, and then threw himself back with a sigh almost of despair into his managerial arm-chair. I opened the note, and read—

'Miss Beauchamp presents her compliments to the manager, and regrets that pressing business, over which she has no control, compels her to absent herself for a week. Of course she is prepared to forfeit, &c.'

This was indeed a sad *contretemps*. Here was our first lady in the light business pitching up her engagement, and nobody to take her place, and this, too, at a juncture when our only chance of getting safe out of the season was by holding on to the 'Blessed Confederates,' in which she sustained the principal part! I confess I pitied from my heart George F. Raynor, Manager, as he sat looking at me wistfully, and Ingholdsby's lines occurred to my mind:—

'Doldrum the manager sits in his chair.'

With a gloomy brow and dissatisfied air.'

I was quite ashamed to press the matter of salary, and endeavoured to administer some consolation and advice. 'Suppose, Raynor,' said I, 'you try something in the illegitimate way. Get a fellow that whistles like a bird, and mimics an entire farm-yard, pigs and all. Call

him Herr or Signor in the bills, and run him on between the acts; or suppose you fish out a juggler, or an elastic brother, or a Brazilian wire-walker, or a—' I don't know how many more suggestions of this ingenious kind I would have offered, when they were cut short by an impatient 'pshaw!' or at least a sound which that word is meant to represent, for who ever heard a human being say pshaw?

'It's no use, Charley; the public won't swallow those things unless they can wash them down with beer, and have them served up with tobacco, as at the harmonic halls; but I'll tell you what I'll do with you: find me somebody to act with you efficiently in the "Confederates," and I'll double the advance you are asking.'

'Done!' I cried, without the least sensible consideration of what I was binding myself to; 'but—'

'Come now, my boy, no buts. Go off and see to it at once. I will leave everything to yourself: bring in any one, I will ask no questions, and give her the same terms as I did that (adjective) minx Beauchamp. Down in the country, indeed! I know the part of the country she goes to!'

We arranged business for that evening, and shook hands, and in a minute after I found myself standing in the street, outside the stage entrance—standing in that stupidly absorbed manner of a person who is utterly bewildered as to his next movement. Rousing myself at last, I ran over in my mind the names of such professional ladies as I was acquainted with, but I found they had all engagements either in London or the provinces. The part required not only a competent actress, but an actress with a good voice, as there were several choice bits of music interspersed through it. At last a happy thought occurred to me. Living at St. John's Wood was an old friend of mine, and formerly of my mother's. In her day this old woman had been a famous Lady Teazle, and she now added to a comfortable income by training pupils for the stage. If there was any one in town capable of

helping me in the present strait, she was just that individual. I knew she would be most anxious to assist me, for I had often put in a favourable word for her *protégées*. I hailed a cab, drove off to her quarters, and fortunately found her at home. She received me very warmly, and after a few commonplace inquiries, I opened the object of my visit.

'I am glad,' said she, 'that curmudgeon Raynor is in such a fix; it was only last week I offered to send him a singing chambermaid, cleverer than any he ever had in his house, and he had the impudence to tell me she should come for six months on trial as a walking lady, look as pretty as she could, and try to forget my old-fashioned teaching. Walking lady! why the poor thing only wants an opportunity, and would take her place before the best of them all.'

'Could I see this prodigy?' I broke in, hastily.

'Well,' said the old lady, answering my thoughts, 'you could not see her before to-morrow, and I am sorry for it, for I am certain she would suit you.'

'To-morrow would be too late, Mrs. Layton,' I replied, despondingly; 'Raynor will break off with me unless I succeed before Thursday' (it was then Tuesday), 'and whatever your paragon may do, she could scarcely get over all these lengths and songs.' And here I handed her the 'study,' rolled up in that telescopic shape in which we always carry the lucubrations of dramatic authorship. She glanced over it hastily.

'Charley,' said she, 'this is the very thing for Louise, and if you call here at ten o'clock to-morrow, I will introduce you; but mind,' she laughed, 'you don't fall in love with her: she is a dear little girl, and a pet of mine, and I won't have her dangled after by a clever eccentric, who rather likes the reputation of a conquest.'

'Come, come, mother,' returned I—*Hon! soit qui mal y pense*; 'is there no way of seeing her before to-morrow?' (For, to tell the truth, I was anxious to have an opportu-

nity of extending my search if I was not satisfied with the result of the inspection.)

'There is a way, if I was certain I could trust you. Will you pledge your word not to tell on me afterwards, or use the information I give you further than is absolutely requisite?' I gave the required promise. 'Well, then, I have been striving everywhere to get an opening for Loo, and cannot succeed. She is badly off, and is obliged to support a drunken father, who insists on her bringing him money, and never asks where she gets it. The poor girl, in short, has been driven to take employment at a harmonic hall' (here she told me the particular one), 'and she sings there every night. I myself take her there, and from, and can assure you she is as good and innocent a creature as ever lived. Now if your curiosity must be gratified, you can go to the place this evening, get into one of the supper-boxes, and ask a waiter to show you Louise Deltour. When you come here to-morrow, of course you won't pretend anything. Now, good-bye,' and she nodded me off.

I managed to have my work over at ten o'clock, and half-past ten found me seated in a side box at the harmonic hall. Strange to say, this was my first visit to an establishment of the kind, and the impression made on me was so peculiar I may be excused for recording it. Though so well accustomed to face an audience, I felt I could no more go on that stage, before the men and women assembled in that splendidly-decorated room, than I could shoot myself. The half-bemused stare of the crowd, the noise, clinking of spoons and glasses, popping of aerated drinks, the unsuppressed laugh, the careless, insolent applause, the groups of simpering painted things that lined the galleries, all and everything so unsuited for an exhibition of decent art, and so suited for the exhibition of that lamp-black nigger, who brayed, and jabbered, and stamped before the foot-lights! I took a moral from the latter disgusting mimicry of my profession, as a

Greek child might in the olden time when shown a drunken Helot in his cups. But I had very little time to continue my reflections, when a waiter appeared.

'Shall I take your order, sir?'

'Yes, bring me—no, stop. Waiter, is Miss Deltour here?'

'Miss Deltour, sir? Yes, sir; but you can't see Miss Deltour; she never sees nobody; but if you wish for Miss Brown, or Miss Flithers, I dessay they'll be 'appy to be introduced if you ask the manager, sir.'

I looked at the fellow, and must have stared him into perceiving his mistake, for he went on, perceptibly embarrassed—

'Oh! I see, sir, take supper alone, sir; beg pardon, did you say cham—?'

'No; a glass of sherry, and tell me when Miss Deltour sings.'

'Miss Deltour sings, sir, hin the selections hafter the moosical stones, which the moosical stones is now hon view. There's the purfessor hisself, just a-goin' to begin. Much obliged to you, sir.'

I paid very little attention to the bearded and dissipated-looking personage who was knocking short jerky sounds out of a wooden trough, which, I suppose, contained the 'moosical' stones. I waited impatiently for the selections, which I guessed would be operatic. After a great deal too much of it, the professor gave a final beat on his parallelogram, and disappeared to an uncertain murmur liable to be equivocally interpreted; and immediately afterwards a small, but noisy orchestra commenced the overture to 'Martha.' I think there were five in all came forward to sing in some part music from Flotow's agreeable opera. Glancing at the women, I had not much difficulty in fixing on Miss Deltour. If there was only one lady in the concern who would not accept acquaintances made in such a free and easy manner, it must be that rather petite, well-set one with the grave and but slightly rouged face, who sang with a clever artistic grace, and carefully avoided that vulgar exaggeration and emphasis, so liberally imparted to the scena by

her companions. She was perfectly modest in her demeanour, her gestures were correct and appropriate, and she had a finish of manner which more than made up for a voice which though very sweet was somewhat deficient in vibration. When the violins were tearing furiously through the final 'hurries,' and the singers were screaming and

bawling to their utmost, amidst the cheers and stamping of beery soldiers, fast young men from shops, mechanics, cheap swells and seedy ringdoves, she preserved the same placid, almost disdainful expression, which raised her immeasurably above the ranting group by which she was surrounded.

I was punctual to my appoint-



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ment next morning. Mrs. Layton introduced me formally, and acquainted Miss Deltour fully with the curious accident that put such a chance in her way. 'She has gone over the part, Charley, and says she will be able for it. Suppose, dear, you rehearse a little now with Mr.

Cleveland; it will be easier for you than doing it for the first time before the company. Mr. Cleveland will, I am sure, make every allowance for your inexperience.'

'But,' I interrupted, 'Miss Deltour could scarce have had time to read the piece.'

'I think I know it, sir,' said she, quietly.

So we went to work. The entire business, dialogue and all, was, I may say, confined to the characters we represented—in fact, it had been written expressly for Miss Fanny Beauchamp and myself. I was surprised and delighted at Miss Deltour's rehearsal. She so thoroughly comprehended the spirit of the lively *mélange*, rendered the songs so neatly and perfectly, and banded the hits with me in the proper shuttlecock style, quip for quip and joke for joke, never missing a word or even hesitating for one, that I completely forgot I was merely helping a neophyte, and dashed away as if the house was full, and I was standing beside the most accomplished and experienced of actresses. Mrs. Layton (who held the book to prompt, but had no occasion to use it) was overjoyed beyond anything when I heartily congratulated her on her pupil. She kissed her affectionately, and told her over and over again her fortune was made. I now took more particular notice of Miss Deltour. She was not positively handsome, though her features were well shaped. Her eyes were dark-blue, with a deep sunk fire of passion and sensibility dwelling in them, under such restraint though, that you should look carefully to perceive it. Her mouth was small, but drooped and quivered at the corners sometimes, as if she had gone through harder lines than suited her age, which might be about twenty. Her hands were long and white, finished with thoroughbred filbert-shaped nails. Her manner was that of a self-possessed lady, who could not afford to give herself extra airs, but was simply polite to a brother artist. I was, I believe, the least bit disappointed she did not express any special gratitude or thankfulness to me—though, on second thoughts, I had to admit I ought not to expect gratitude from a young lady whom I turned to account to raise my salary. I told her I would undertake all the necessary arrangements for her with the manager, and that one other rehearsal would be amply

sufficient after what I had seen. I would be happy to meet her next morning at the theatre, at 11 o'clock.

G. F. Raynor was puzzled when I told him I thought I had won our bet. He could scarce believe it possible. Of course I said nothing about the harmonic hall. If there was an institution on earth upon which he would emphatically invoke the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, that institution was a harmonic hall. He was the most eager to prosecute them of all the managers, and cursed them by night and day, as the destruction of the British theatre. I knew if I mentioned Miss Deltour in connection with them, even her extraordinary ability would not save her the situation. She was at our next rehearsal. She had to stand all the whispered remarks and titterings of the walking ladies and the limp *corps de ballet*, who came to practise the gaieties of the 'Bower of Roses,' done to a single violin, and in long dresses, high bonnets, and Balmoral boots. But she went through without paying the slightest attention to their interruptions; and at night took both them and the audience by storm. We had a very considerable house, drawn partly by the revival of the comedietta, which had been favourably spoken of by the press, and partly by the curiosity of the public, who flocked to see a new actress. I had taken care whatever could be done on the bills in two days was done. We made so decided a hit in 'Blessed Confederates' that we were over and over again enthusiastically called for; and the play was announced for representation until further notice. G. F. was excited to a pitch of good-humour I believed him incapable of.

'By Jove, Cleveland!' said he, 'I'll carry out my wager with you, and throw a white-bait into the bargain.'

'Blessed Confederates' had a run of three weeks, and I verily think saved Raynor from bankruptcy. I might as well confess at once that I fell over head and ears in love with my interesting playmate. The old, old sentiment took first the softening guise of pity, then of admiration,

and then came a wild impassioned affection, for which I could give neither date nor reason. Once I recollect acting 'Poor Pillicoddy' with her, and delivering the mock pathos of the Cockney nurseryman in a Romeo-in-the-garden tone of voice which brought down the house in roars. She gave me a look of grave and distant reproach which soon brought me to my senses, for her womanly instinct detected my indecorous earnestness, veiled from all others under the jingling patter of the farce. I suspect she knew of my feelings for her as soon as I knew them myself. Yet somehow I was afraid to hint anything, for, except on the stage, I am timid and bashful to a degree, especially with ladies whom I respect. I called her Louise, with her tacit permission, but she never addressed me except as Mr. Cleveland. To the rest of the company she was reserved, nay almost haughty, and was consequently no favourite.

One evening—it is fixed in my memory as if it only occurred yesterday—after the drop had fallen, we both went into the green-room, where the rest of the corps were assembled, together with a number of the usual stage dangles. All were apparently doing complimentary homage to a lady dressed in walking costume, who was seated on a lounge. On my entrance with Louise, she rose, and I recognized my original 'Confederate,' Fanny Beauchamp. She trotted over to me immediately, and saucily turned down her cheek. Now, a month since, diffident as I am, I would certainly have accepted the challenge, but now I felt that Louise was watching me, and experienced a repugnance to such a familiarity, which I could not explain. To relieve the awkwardness of the situation, I introduced Miss Beauchamp—Miss Deltour. Louise curtsied; but to the astonishment of every one (and they were regarding the meeting with some interest) Fanny returned her salute with a cold, hard stare, with so much of downright insult conveyed in it, that poor Louise coloured up like crimson.

'Look here, George Raynor! come

here, I say!' said Miss Fanny, stamping her little foot nervously against the ground. 'So you supply your ladies from the singing-women of harmonic halls?'

'No, certainly not. What the deuce do you mean, Fanny?' answered the puzzled manager.

'Ask Miss Deltour,' replied Fanny with a sneer. The bystanders tittered sympathisingly.

'Mr. Raynor,' said Louise, stepping forward, her pale face paler now, but sending a brave keen glance that made them shrink like frightened curs from her, 'I regret having placed you in a false position: this person is right' (Fanny quailed at the contemptuous way she used the slight word); 'and I now remember the occasion, and the associate she was with, when she acquired her information. If you have any hesitation about retaining me, I will remove the embarrassment in the only manner in my power. Mr. Cleveland, your arm.' And there we left them in as dramatic a situation as ever they found themselves.

'Come now,' said she, 'walk home part of my way this evening; I will never go near that place again, and I want to thank you for all your kindness: perhaps, however' (here she stopped suddenly), 'Mr. Cleveland would not care to be seen with me since he has become acquainted with my antecedents?'

'I knew them before. I knew of the harmonic hall,' I returned quietly.

'Did you?' she asked, and as we passed near a lamp I thought I saw her glance at me kindly, and even—I thought so—more than kindly; I am sure her hand closed almost involuntarily on my arm.

'I have gone through a great deal—a great deal,' she said sadly, and half to herself. 'Oh, how weary it is, this life! I often wish I were dead, and out of it.'

'Louise,' said I, 'I love you sincerely, and if you only—'

'There—there,' interrupted she, quickly, but not angrily; 'don't talk that way to me. I don't dislike you, Charley' (I started—this was the first time she had called me by

my Christian name); 'but I cannot listen to you at present. You deserve better than I am. I will leave London to-morrow for Glasgow. It is more than probable we shall never see each other again. I will not forget you easily. Good-bye.' And she spoke all this as if she were choking.

I bent over her hand, and pressed my lips to it, and she drew it gently from me and turned away. Then I watched her to the end of the street, and thought she looked round once another moment, and she was gone.

Raynor did not much care for losing Miss Deltour, now that Fanny had returned to him. That young lady exercised an influence over him through means which I do not care to detail. What misery I endured acting with her night after night, and hating her with a sickening intensity even while she laughingly surrendered herself to my stage caresses! At times I felt I could even strike her. When, a few days after, I parted with my darling, I related the occurrence from beginning to end to Mrs. Layton, she could not suppress her indignation.

'Fanny Beauchamp has no right to turn up her nose at any one. If I were near her, I would remind her of the time her mother was capering on piebald ponies at Astley's, and was remarkable for having about as much character as petticoat. But, Charley, Louise is gone off, and left something with me for you, if you should call. Here it is. I hope you have not had a lovers' quarrel, and that she is returning you your letters.'

'No, indeed, Mrs. Layton; she would not have me at all.'

'I am sorry for that; but she is sensitive, and foolish on many points, and has devoted her talents, her health, and chance of position in society, to support a sot of a father who has been turned very properly adrift by all belonging to him. But I suppose she has acquainted you with her circumstances. I know she liked you extremely.'

'Did she say so?' I asked, eagerly.

'Come, sir, I won't be cross-

questioned. Away with you, and read your fate in that envelope.'

I took it home—if I could call my furnished lodgings a home—and could scarce break the seal, my eagerness and anxiety were so great. Would she commence 'My dear sir,' or 'Dear Mr. Cleveland,' or 'Dear Charley?' When I did summon up courage enough two letters fell out of the enclosure, and there was a small folded note addressed to me. It began without any heading at all; it was merely to say that before leaving she had found the enclosed letters in her father's room, and from his (here 'habits' was evidently erased, and 'carelessness' substituted), she suspected he had neglected to answer them. Would I be kind enough to see after them if they were of any consequence? The note was subscribed 'Clare Stevens,' so that Deltour was evidently but a *nom de théâtre*. I read the two letters carefully. They were from a solicitor's firm—Messrs. Seal and Stamp—requesting Mr. Stevens or his daughter to call at their office, as they had intelligence of importance to communicate. I went directly to the place, and was ushered in to the principal—a mild, gentlemanly man, with a peculiarity about his mildness that somehow immediately impressed you with the idea that it would be a sheer impossibility to take him in. He politely pointed to a seat, and waited for me to introduce my business. This I did in very few words. Mr. Stevens and his daughter were obliged to leave town suddenly. I would take any intelligence for them.

'Well, sir,' said Mr. Seal, smiling most benevolently, 'my business with them was of a very agreeable character. Some time since we received an advice from our Irish correspondent that a considerable legacy had been left Miss Stevens, who was supposed to be living with her father towards the west end of London. After innumerable inquiries, we have now reason to believe your friends, to whom my letters were sent, are the parties we are in quest of. One interview, even a letter answering

certain formal questions, will be sufficient as a preliminary, and then I shall have the pleasure of handing over the amount to Miss Stevens, or lodging it to her credit. Could you give me their present address?' I gave it him. 'I shall write immediately.' 'Yes,' said I, 'and if you want the matter directly attended to, communicate with Miss Stevens herself.'

Love is selfish, despite what poets write. If a man loves a woman, his dearest and first wish is that she be brought close and near to him, and he is jealous of any fortune that puts her beyond his reach. I was perhaps more sorry than glad when I learned of Clare's good luck. My very connection with the stage made me specially distrustful of romantic conclusions, and I believed she was lost to me for ever now that she had become rich. Friends would come, and then a husband. A husband! Until that thought struck me I did not fully know how I was absorbed in her. When I pictured to myself another in that place I believed to be mine by right—mine, above all others living! For who could love her as I did? Who else would discover beneath that placid, absent face those depths of sensibility and yearning tenderness which it was, almost unconsciously to myself, my secret hope and dream to bring forth into a warm and stirring affection, which we two were to share together, and never, never part from until death? And in this strain my mind ran on, and one day slipped by and another came, and each night I had to laugh and joke in the midst of the wretchedness gnawing at my heart. Often was I cheered for the wild exuberance and spirit of my acting when I was merely delirious with this fire of disappointment in my brain, burning there—burning there, until my poor head throbbed on my pillow at night, and, worn out with the fever, I dropped off into a sleep—sometimes into a long dream, in which she was kind to me, and we were all I wished us to be! But then the bitter waking came, and another day and night of misery!

I could not bring myself to in-

quire any particulars at Messrs. Seal and Stamp's. I had a nervous dread of knowing more, and for the same silly reason I avoided calling on Mrs. Layton. I would try and forget, Clare. That was all left me now. I would even go away from every scene that reminded me of her; and so, when my engagement was concluded with Raynor, I joined a company on a provincial tour, and travelled with them to Liverpool, remaining a few weeks in Douglas, Isle of Man. When I returned to London I found my health so impaired from excessive work and want of rest that I was obliged to consult a physician. I was fortunate enough to have hit upon an intelligent and kindly man. He put a few sensible queries to me, inquired my profession and habits, and then tested my lungs with his stethoscope. I thought he looked rather grave when removing the instrument.

'Is it in your power, sir,' said he, 'to take a long sea voyage?'

'Well,' I replied, 'I have' had a good offer to go to Australia.'

'Then I can recommend you no better medicine, sir, than to accept the offer; and the sooner you start the sooner will your constitution mend. You have no immediate danger to fear, but rest and change are absolutely requisite for you.'

Two days before my intended departure from London for Australia, I determined to call on Mrs. Layton, partly from a wish to bid her farewell, and principally, if the truth must be owned, to get some news about Clare, and talk of her for the last time. When Mrs. Layton saw me she could not conceal her apprehension and pity at my appearance. I told her how my mind was made up to leave England.

'And so you are going off for good, or bad, and you have never asked me for Louise—or rather Clare. Of course you know her name.'

I had been there half an hour with that name on my lips, and afraid to trust myself to speak it!

'And how—how is she?' I managed to blurt out. 'Have you heard from her?'

'Heard from her! to be sure I have heard from her! Look at this shawl and chain, and tell me who else would be kind enough to make an old woman like me such presents. Why there is not a day she does not come here!'

'Come here!' I repeated. 'Then she is in London?'

'Yes, Cleveland, Clare is in London,' returned she, archly; 'and very lonely, I suspect, in London, too, despite her money. Her wretched father died in Glasgow a few days after they arrived there; and what between the shock his death gave her, and this strange turn in her fortune, she was nigh distracted. I cannot imagine what brought her back here, but here she came; renewed an old acquaintance who was glad enough to be renewed when she found Clare was well off, and she is now living at Brompton. This is one of her days for visiting me. Would you not like to see her before you go among the aborigines?'

'I would indeed,' I said, in a dazed, feeble sort of way; for what with surprise, and a thousand strange emotions of hope and love, I was scarce able to speak. The old lady poured out a glass of wine for me, and kindly pressed me to take it.

Then we were silent. It was late in the autumn, and the days were becoming short. I can call to mind now the quiet grey closing of that day, and the myriad noises of the city, and the clang of some church clock, and a ringing, surging sound in my ears. My whole frame, weakened as it was, was morbidly alive and sensitive to every influence, however remote, that could touch on Clare. This was the room we first acted in together. It was there she stood near the piano, and I by the fireplace. The very feel and rustle of her dress seemed to come to me at the moment! Should

I really see her again? And then if I did, would—*Rat-tat-tat-tat!*

'Here she is at last,' said Mrs. Layton, rising up. 'Excuse me, Charley; I always run down to meet her.'

And I was quite alone waiting for her—only a moment, though; and I hear her voice and her step; she is coming up stairs; but I could not stir. I sat there trembling, and my heart beating wildly.

'Why, Mrs. Layton—' And then a figure in black, which had half opened the door, turned round and whispered something.

'Oh, it's only Mr. Cleveland! He is going away to Australia, and has come to bid us good-bye. I made him stay for you.' I thought Mrs. Layton was very quick in making this announcement about Australia.

I made an effort to rise, and went over and took her hand. She said nothing, but let it rest in mine. Mrs. Layton had glided from the room like a ghost. It was nearly dark, and I had to stand very near Clare to see her.

'Do you go at once, Charley?'

'Yes,' said I, hesitatingly. 'I leave Liverpool on Wednesday—that is if—if—'

'If what, Charley?'

'If you do not bid me stay, Clare.'

It was darker than before, and I had to go nearer and lean down my head to catch her answer; and her velvet cheek was to mine when she murmured—

'Stay with me, Charley. I would be lonely without you always.'

And this is my story. I bade farewell to the stage; and what with some little money I had saved, and my wife's income, we are better than well off. I did not go to Australia; rest and home comforts cured me perfectly. And many a time have Clare and I laughed over the strange chance that made us 'Blessed Confederates' for life.

ST. DAVID'S DAY.

IN that veracious and delightful history of the 'Seven Champions of Christendom,' which we all read with such thrilling interest as boys and girls, we learned how St. David, the patron saint of Wales, roamed about in like manner with his six fellow-champions, as a knight-errant, rescuing unprotected females, fighting against wrong and oppression, and ridding the world of giants and other monstrosities, until he unfortunately fell into the power of the vile magician, Ormandine, whose spells threw the doughty Welshman into an enchanted sleep of (as nearly as we recollect) some centuries' duration. From other chronicles, perhaps equally veracious, we learn that instead of being a warrior, St. David was in reality a priest, 'a wonder in his learning and eloquence,' that both during his life and for many, very many years after his decease, he worked the most astounding miracles; that he was the son of Xantus, prince of Cardiganshire, and that when he died, A. D. 544, his spirit was distinctly seen by St. Kentigern, carried upwards by angels.

Of the two accounts, we must admit the monkish legend has one advantage over the old favourite romance. It is at any rate 'particular in dates.' To a matter-of-fact age like the present, 'A. D. 544' certainly appears a more authentic period than 'once upon a time.' The statement, too, that St. David was the son of Xantus, prince of Cardiganshire, especially when accompanied, as it is, by a seemingly reluctant admission by the chronicler that our hero's mother was not married to his father, bears about it a degree of circumstantiality very different from the vague manner in which we are first introduced to him in the company of the other six champions of Christendom, prisoners in the magic castle of the Enchantress Kalyba. We know of a certainty that there is such a place as Cardiganshire; we can place our fingers on it on the map—nay, we can even go by railway there, and see it for ourselves.

We know, too, that there must have been a year 544; we can count up exactly how many years it was ago. But who shall tell us where (if anywhere) the magic castle of the Enchantress Kalyba was situate? Who can say in what year (if ever) the seven champions were imprisoned there?

Still are we loath to give up the St. David of our school-days. Our early hero-worship is too apt to get rude shocks from after-reading. Have we not heard that our great English Champion, the renowned St. George himself, was a mere swindling army-contractor—in fact, a bacon-merchant?—that, instead of going about spearing dragons, his chief avocation was sticking pigs! Out on such so-called useful knowledge! Some wisacre will next, perhaps, discover that our favourite St. David was nothing more than a market-gardener, who amassed a fortune by cultivating leeks, and that his countrymen have adopted that savoury esculent as their national emblem in honour of the commercial success of their patron saint!

St. David has indeed already been made the victim of gross misrepresentation. Vile calumny, in combination with equally vile orthography, has made free with his name, in every sense of the word. Who among us does not remember the slanderous verses, commencing, 'Taffy,' (a palpable corruption of the honoured name of 'David' or 'Davy')—

'Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,
Taffy came to my house,
And stole a leg of beef?'

And then the ridiculous assertions that follow, of how the anonymous libeller went to Taffy's house, and found 'he wasn't at home.' (He does not tell us what petty-larceny advantage he himself took of David's absence!)—how David afterwards revisited the scene of his former theft (a likely story).

'Taffy came to my house.'

(Whose house? Has the fellow

no name to give, who brings such charges?)

'And stole a marrow-bone!'

Here the slanderer confutes himself—as slanderers always do in the long run. We thought we should catch him. Had the first theft David is charged with really been committed, the second would have been obviously unnecessary—not to say impossible. Had David really stolen the leg of beef on his first visit, why return for the marrow-bone? HE WOULD HAVE HAD IT ALREADY INSIDE THE LEG! So we dismiss the subsequent charge of sluggishness brought against David, and the alleged punishment inflicted upon him with the purloined marrow-bone, while he was still 'in bed,' as utterly unworthy of credence.

On this present First of March, which, as every reader of an almanack will know, is St. David's Day, individuals will be met with in almost all parts of the United Kingdom—ay, and in far-off Australia, in America (especially we should say in the distant Salt-lake settlement, which has been largely stocked by Welshmen),—in every place, in short, where Britons find a home, individuals will be met with wearing imitation leeks, either in their hats or button-holes. This custom, like the similar one of Irishmen wearing the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day, is gradually dying out, but still the custom and the sentiment which prompts it do exist. And who shall mock that sentiment? Patriotism may sink to provincialism, to parochialism, even to egotism, but in itself it is a noble feeling. In theory, doubtless, it were better all were cosmopolitan—that to love our neighbour as ourselves should be the maxim with states and provinces as with individuals. But who does not feel that there is a natural sentiment in the human breast, that when we think of our birthplace—whether nation, county, nay, even village, leads us to say—

'In one delightful word, it is our home!'

All honour then to the Welshmen, who are not ashamed to proclaim their nationality upon their own saint's day!

Of the origin of this custom of

wearing leeks upon St. David's Day (formerly the real article was worn, the artificial leek is an innovation) we have, as with everything else connected with our saint, most varying accounts. Of one thing only can we be sure. It dates from a very remote antiquity. One set of writers declare that the custom arose from St. David having caused the Britons under King Cadwalader, 'to wear each a leek as a mark to distinguish themselves from their enemies during a great battle in which St. David caused the victory to rest with the Britons.' Others, again, trace it to the time of the Druids, and see in it a symbol employed in honour of the British Ceudven—or Ceres.

Shakespeare evidently inclined to the former belief, for in the well-known scene of Henry V., when Fluellen makes the braggart Pistol eat the leek he had mocked at, we find Gower upbraiding Pistol, after his punishment, in these words, 'Will you mock at an ancient tradition—begun upon an honourable respect, and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour?'

Be the origin of wearing the leek, however, what it may, it is certain that for a very long time the exhibition of this national symbol by Welshmen on St. David's Day was considered a terrible offence by Englishmen. It appears to have aroused in the Anglo-Saxon breast much the same kind of unreasoning fury that a red rag excites in the cerebral organs of a bull or turkey-cock. So also, on the other hand, the non-exhibition of the leek upon the national saint's day, even by an Englishman, excited an equal amount of indignation in the Cambrian mind. One quaint old writer, after dwelling upon the 'manie thousands' of miracles worked by St. David, says, 'I only desire all true-hearted Welchmen always to honour this their great patrone and protector, and supplicate the divine goodness to reduce his sometimes beloved country out of the blindness of *Protestancie*, grovelling in which it languisheth. Not only in Wales, but all England over is most famous in memory of St. David. But in these our unhappy days the

greatest part of his solemnitie consisteth in wearing of a greene leeke, and it is a sufficient theme for a zealous Welchman to ground a quarrel against him that doth not honour his capp with a like ornament that day.

So far from the Welsh point of view. On the other side we all know how the braggart Pistol beforenamed threatened to resent Fluellen wearing of the leek he had himself afterwards to eat, with sauce of oaken cudgel.

'Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate,
Upon Saint Davy's Day.'

Welshmen, however, as instanced in this very case of Pistol *versus* Fluellen, do not always stand quiet to have their leeke knocked about their pates—so the angry Saxon adopts other, and perhaps safer modes of giving vent to his *Cymrophobia*. If he cannot thrash Taffy in person he can at any rate hang him in effigy. Thus we find that best of all gossipers, Mr. Pepys, writing on March 1, 1666-7—

'In Mark-lane, I do observe (it being St. David's Day) the picture of a man dressed like a Welshman, hanging by the neck upon one of the poles that stand out at the top of one of the merchant's houses, in full proportion and very handsomely done, which is one of the oddest sights I have seen a good while.'

Oh, Mr. Pepys! Had a Fluellen of your day been at your elbow when you described this sight as 'very handsomely done,' of a truth you would yourself have been cudgelled into 'one of the oddest sights you had seen a good while.'

We have said that this hostile feeling caused by the presence or absence of the leek upon St. David's Day, between the two nationalities, was of very long duration. One more instance to verify the statement, and we have done with this part of our subject. Shakespeare in the sixteenth century, Pepys (not quite so great a man), in the seventeenth, allude to it. 'Poor Robin' (good in his way, but not a Shakespeare—not even a Pepys) shall speak for the eighteenth. In 'Poor Robin's Almanac,' so late as the year 1757, we have a lot of verses

telling us how the Welsh angered the English on St. David's Day, by wearing leeke. 'But,' he goes on to say in a quasi-triumphant strain—

'But it would make a stranger laugh
To see the English hang poor Taff;
A pair of breeches, and a coat,
Hat, shoes, and stockings, and what not
All stuffed with hay, to represent
The Cambrian hero thereby meant;
With sword sometimes three inches broad,
And other armour made of wood,
They drag him to some publick tree,
And hang him up in effigy.'

And now, having had out our gossip with the reader about St. David and his Day, what, let us ask ourselves, are these countrymen of his—these Welshmen—of whom we hear so little in the current literature of the day? Well, truth to tell, they are very much like ourselves. Your railway is a great destroyer of landmarks. Trains running to and fro daily tend vastly to amalgamate the characteristics of the dwellers at either end of the line. The Welsh—save that their women (many of them) still wear the hat known as the chimney-pot, of which even men in England are beginning to get tired (the Welsh hat being more conical and flatter in the brim than ours); save that they speak another language (though fewer and fewer every year speak Welsh); save that all Welshmen who think at all of what they are and have been, feel that they have a national history, traditions, and a language, older by centuries than the English, by whom they are being rapidly absorbed; save that they were, until this present railway era, a race shut up apart in their own charming though secluded vales and mountains—the Welsh are very much as we are. They buy and sell as we do, only they do it better. Perhaps no race that ever lived—perhaps no individual, even supposing him of Jewish parents, born in Scotland, and brought up in America, can beat your Welshman at a bargain. If you would buy of a Welshman, and he asks you a sovereign, offer him ten shillings. He will swear a good deal (we mean he will use solemn affirmations—not bad language), he will protest more. But be sure he will ultimately take

twelve or fourteen shillings, and then feel he has done a good stroke of trade. If you would sell to a Welshman what you deem a pound's worth, ask him one pound ten. He will beat you down for a certainty to the original sovereign. So you will get your money, and he will rejoice over having got a bargain. And so both parties will be satisfied, and the greatest happiness will be insured to the greatest number.

We have said that fewer Welshmen every year speak Welsh. They may form themselves into Cymrygyddion societies, may speechify, and sing, and write penillion and englynion* in praise of Welsh; may inscribe upon their banners the motto, 'Oes y byd i'r iaith gymraeg' (The duration of the world to the Welsh language); may hold their hardic meetings or Eisteddfodau,† with a view to the preservation of the old language; yet spite of all, as surely as the ship will sink when all the efforts of the crew cannot prevent the leak from gaining on them, so surely will the ancient tongue of Wales become extinct. A brave and noble language it is, but none the less a doomed and dying one. To inquire into all the various causes which are at work, surely and by no means slowly banishing Welsh from among the spoken languages of the earth, would demand an amount of space far beyond that at our command. One will suffice. Welsh is not—nor ever was to any great extent—the language of commerce. Retail trade is of course conducted in the native tongue (though few indeed even of the smallest shopkeepers, except in the very remote districts, are unacquainted with English); but for the more important commercial operations, the language of that enterprising Anglo-Saxon race which has taught Wales what commerce means is universally adopted. A contract of any magnitude, written in Welsh, would be a curiosity. Hence it arises that every Welshman who desires his children should get on in life, has them taught English, as a matter of necessity;

whether or not they acquire a knowledge of their own language also, is quite a secondary consideration. As an instance of how strongly the natives are impressed with the superior advantages of speaking English, we may mention, that some years back, when we ourselves, residing in the principality, endeavoured to learn the language as a mere accomplishment, our blundering attempts to converse in Welsh were set down to our pride! It is a fact, strange though it may seem, in a people that profess (and feel) such love for their own tongue. 'Iss indeed, look ye-ou,' said an old Welsh native, referring to our own miserable lingual failure. 'He could speak Welsh well enough if he liked, but he's too proud!'

Many of our English readers will doubtless smile at the idea of our learning Welsh as an accomplishment, as well as at our speaking of it as a noble language. It is the fashion to consider Welsh a hideous, uncouth, and barbarous tongue. It is really nothing of the kind. Printed in our English types, it is not, we confess, prepossessing at first sight. It certainly presents strange combinations of letters, and is apparently made up of unpronounceable clusters of consonants. But it is only apparently so. To begin with, the constantly recurring 'w' and 'y' are always vowels in Welsh, not, as with us, more frequently consonants. The double letters, again, we so often meet with, 'dd' and 'll,' and such combinations as 'nh,' 'ngh,' represent single sounds. So far, indeed, is the Welsh language from having a superabundance of consonant sounds, that on a comparison of English and Welsh (the same matter being chosen at random in both languages), it was found that in English there was considerably more than four times the excess of consonants over vowels than there was in Welsh! Is the reader still incredulous? Will no assurance of ours disabuse him of the notion that the ancient language of Wales is a jaw-breaking mass of consonants? What will he say, then, to a verse of four lines, made up wholly and exclusively of vowels! Any one acquainted with

* Different kinds of Welsh poetry.

† The plural of 'Eisteddfod,' of which more hereafter.

the language will tell him that the following is good Welsh:—

'O'i wîw dy i wen 8 â, a'i wau,
'O'i wiau, e' wau,
E' wau ei de ala,
A'i wau yw iauan ll.*

There! Four lines without a single consonant! Let any one do that in English if he can!

Well, well; and after all, what does it signify? Is it worth taking up the cudgels in defence of a language which even its most enthusiastic admirers admit to be moribund? We ourselves know Welshmen who will tell you, and believe they prove it by certain names in Genesis, and what not, that Welsh was the primeval language; that when our mother Eve called her first-born Cain, and said, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord,' she used two Welsh words signifying, 'I have got one,' and which, we must admit, are strikingly like the sound of the name Cain; that when her second saw the light, and was called Abel, it was because he was *ab ail* (Welsh for 'the second son'); that the names Adam, Eve, and others, can be perfectly accounted for in Welsh, more readily than in any other known language. We say we know of Welshmen who maintain all this; but none have we ever met with who venture to prophesy for the Welsh tongue a long duration.

We have said it is not the language of commerce. Whether or not it ever could have been made so had the race who spoke it been the leading merchants in their own land, we know not; but to an English mind it seems but ill adapted to business purposes. Apart from the fact that it has no words to express any of the modern inventions and articles of commerce, its numeration appears clumsy in the extreme. From one to ten it goes on all right. Then come one-and-ten, two-and-ten, &c., up to

fifteen; then one-and-fifteen, &c., up to twenty; thirty is ten-and-twenty; thirty-five, fifteen-and-twenty; thirty-six, one-and-fifteen and twenty; forty, two-twenties; and so on, until ninety-nine becomes four-twenties-and-four-and-fifteen! Could such a mode of reckoning succeed in business? And yet, who knows? France, with the most scientific decimal system in the world, has managed pretty well, though 'quatre-vingt-dix-neuf' is not, after all, so very much more simple than the Welsh ninety-nine.

And what is the Eisteddfod which, as we have said, aims at the preservation of this language? The word literally means a 'sitting' or 'session'; and originally, when the Bards and Druids were the governors of the country, a most important session it was, being neither more nor less than the assemblage of what we may call the bardic parliament. It was summoned by special commission by the Princes of Wales, who were *not* then, as now, the eldest sons of English kings or queens; and its business was to rehearse the traditions of the bardic system, and to regulate all matters respecting their religion and public policy. But Druidism gave place to Christianity, and the bards no longer had all the church and state combined in their own keeping. Still the Eisteddfodau were held, though they became less and less political, and at last purely artistic. Devoted to poetry and song, these sittings of the constituted judges awarded honours, degrees, and emoluments; and no one was qualified to exercise the profession, either of bard or minstrel, till he had (if we may be allowed a modern expression), 'passed the college.' When the English monarchs became rulers of Wales, the Eisteddfodau were still summoned by royal authority as they had been by the native princes, the last of them of which we have any record having been called together by good Queen Bess.

But the Eisteddfod is still held. Granted. But the meetings, which to our day take place from time to time in Wales—albeit the old Druidic forms are studiously observed; the same division into three

* These lines, which we need hardly say have been composed expressly to show the possibility of dispensing with consonants, refer to the spider or silk-worm, and are thus translated:—

'I perish by my art; dig my own grave;—
I spin my thread of life; my death I weave.'

classes, poets, minstrels, and singers; the same awarding of a silver harp as the first prize and highest badge of merit—bear about as much resemblance to the real thing as the Eglinton Tournament did to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. It may be the means of bringing out now and then an extra-good harpist or singer; for all of which we should be thankful. But it can no more prevent the decline and ultimate extinction of the Welsh language than it can restore the government of the principality to the Druids.

There is no denying the fact—whether we mourn or exult over it is all the same—Wales is being gradually but surely absorbed by England. Year by year the Welsh are becoming more like ourselves. Like us, as we have seen, they buy and sell; like us they marry and are given in marriage. Yet stay; perhaps not quite like us in this point. There is (or was) a custom (it is some years since the present writer was in the principality) which might, we think, be copied with advantage by ourselves. We all know what a struggle it is for a young man (with nothing but his own earnings to depend on) to commence housekeeping; we also know the old proverb how 'many can help one.' The custom we speak of is an illustration of this proverb. So soon as a young man had made up his mind to marry, he would call together all his friends and acquaintances—not to feast and make merry at the expense of the young couple or their families, as with us; but to contribute—each according to his means—towards setting up the new household. This is called a 'bidding'; and everything given on such occasions is deemed a debt of honour, invariably repaid whenever the donor should in his turn assume the matrimonial yoke. We annex a copy of a circular which we have preserved for some years. Similar invitations are (or were) always sent out when a wedding among the peasantry was, as fashionable reporters say, on the *tapis*. (We have al-

tered the name and address in the circular.)

Llandovery, March 26th, 18—.

'As I intend to enter the matrimonial state on Easter Monday, the 19th of April next, I am encouraged by my friends to make a Bidding on the occasion the same day, at my dwelling-house in Market Street, when the favour of your good company is humbly solicited; and whatever donation you will be pleased to confer on me then will be gratefully received and cheerfully repaid whenever demanded on a similar occasion, by

'Your humble servant,

'THOMAS GRIFFITHS.

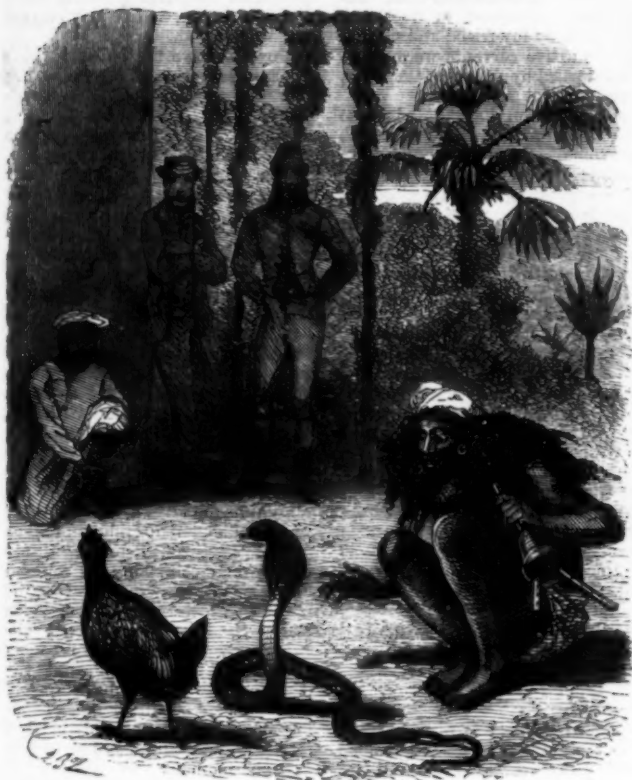
'P.S.—The young man's mother, brother, and sister, Eliza, David, and Martha Griffiths, desire that all gifts of the above nature due to them may be returned to the young man on the said day, and will be thankful for any additional favours bestowed on him.'

Cakes and ale are abundantly furnished at these 'biddings' by the bridegroom; and the guests who assist at them enjoy themselves none the less for the knowledge that they have by their presence contributed to give the young couple a fair start in life.

And now take we our leave of St. David and his Day. One more observation, and only one, have we to make. We know not whether to address it to Garter King-at-Arms, or to whom. But we find that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth there was an order of knighthood—that of St. David of Wales. What has become of it? We have no knowledge when it was instituted or when it died out. But might it not be revived? Now when all England is rejoicing over the birth of a Prince, who must, if he live long enough, one day be King of all this land, could not the Order of St. David once again have being, and might not its first and foremost knight be Albert Edward Prince of Wales?

W. B.

AN HOUR WITH A SNAKE-CHARMER.



'SEEING is believing;' so says the proverb, and if any one is anxious to have doubts removed on any subject, no process will be found so effectual as that of careful ocular demonstration—more especially when that evidence is sceptically examined before its reception as truth. Such was my intention when, for the first time in my life, I was lately introduced to an Indian snake-charmer.

During a professional ride through the station in which I am quartered, I felt somewhat fatigued with the heat of the sun, which was just then excessive, and ventured to call on a

friend for a short shelter, despite the full conviction that I should find him indulging in that mid-day 'siesta,' so common a luxury to the Europeans living in this climate, and yet so fearfully productive of liver congestion, plethora, and splenic disease.

I was not mistaken. 'Never mind me; come in, old boy,' was my friend's salutation, which I answered in person by entering his bedroom, darkened and cooled by artificial means. Making my way to his bedside, I was surprised at seeing two peculiarly bright glistening objects in the corner of the room. I

advanced towards them, but more quickly retired, on being assailed by a loud and unmistakable hiss. Involuntarily a scream in duet was performed by my friend and myself, and the native servants were somewhat startled by shrieks of 'A snake, a snake! Get a gun!'

A consultation was held—of course *outside* the room, and, I need not say, some distance from the door. Various results were arrived at; some suggesting 'shooting,' others 'smoking.' One, more courageous apparently than the rest, proposed that the snake should be 'caught,' and then destroyed.

However, as the originator of this bright idea did not seem in haste to carry his suggestion into practice, and as none of us wished to deprive him of the honour, it was agreed to send to the native bazaar for an Indian snake-charmer. In the meantime we thought another look could do no harm. Carefully and slowly was that door opened. Nervously and tremblingly we peeped in—gradually advanced, looking everywhere—jumped at the least rustle or sound, presenting sorry spectacles of Her Majesty's British soldiers. But soldiers don't like snakes. Why should they?

'Why, he's gone!' 'Take care!' 'Look in the bed, cupboard, drawers, nooks and corners.' No snake!

Then, for the first time, we laughed.

'Hallo! what's this piece of stick near the wall?' 'By Jove, it's his tail!' 'Phew!' 'Don't speak, we shall lose him!' 'Here's the charmer.'

He came, a tall muscular native, a strip of cloth round his waist, his hair long and matted except on the centre of his head, which was shaved close in a circle, and a turban covering it, bearing over his shoulders two baskets and his musical instrument, made out of a gourd with a single bamboo pipe coming from its upper end and two similar ones from its lower, which, being pierced with holes, are played upon like a flute, whilst the breath is blown through the upper and single one.

Before he was allowed to enter the room he was searched, and his

baskets and instrument taken from him. Nothing could have been concealed, for his clothing was reduced to its minimum, and he only carried a short iron rod.

He was shown the hole in which we supposed the snake to be, for now the reptile's tail had disappeared. He lay down on the floor, and placing his face close to the hole, exclaimed, 'Burra sap, sahib, bahut burra.' (Big snake, your honour, very big.) Without any more preparation he commenced digging round the hole, and removed some of the brick-work. In a few minutes he showed us the tail of the reptile, and with sundry incantations in Hindostance and curious contortions of his body, seized hold of the tail, and gradually drew forth the snake. It proved to be a fine specimen of the cobra—a black, shiny, wriggling, hissing, deadly cobra, about five feet long, and at the thickest part eight inches round, with a hood measuring, when extended, five inches across. This reptile he handled freely whilst it was hissing and darting its tongue out every second. Removing it into the yard or compound, he released it. The brute wriggled towards him, and when within a foot or so reared itself up, spread out the enormous hood, and prepared itself to strike at its captor. But the charmer was not to be wounded. He seized his primitive musical instrument, and commenced very slowly to produce low and soft tones, very harmonious but unconnected. The snake seemed astonished: his hood gradually collapsed, his head and about a foot of his body that was raised from the ground commenced to sway from side to side in perfect harmony with the music, and slower and quicker as the time was decreased or increased. As the man played louder the snake got more excited, until its rapid and unusual movements had quite exhausted it, and it subsided.

Again the charmer seized it, and quick as lightning ran his hand up its body, holding it firmly by the throat. By pressing on its neck, the cobra's mouth opened, and he disclosed the fangs, poison bags,

and apparatus complete; thus proving beyond a doubt that it was not a trained or tame reptile he had been treating like a plaything.

Doubts still arose in my mind, however, about the genuineness of the performance, for I could not bring myself to believe that a man would willingly place himself in such close proximity to certain death.

A fowl was now obtained and placed about a foot from the reptile, which was again set free. With the same movements it raised itself a foot from the ground, spread out its hood, and with a loud hiss, apparently of satisfaction, darted upon and seized the fowl by the back of its neck. Hanging there for a few seconds, it let go its hold, and the man at the same instant seized it, as he had formerly done, by the head. The fowl almost instantaneously became drowsy, its head falling forwards, and the beak striking with considerable force into the ground. This convulsive movement lasted ten seconds, and then the bird lay down as if completely comatose and powerless. In fifteen seconds it gave a sudden start, and fell back quite dead. This was the first time I witnessed death from a snake-bite, and it is unquestionably a sudden, quiet, and overpowering poison.

As no deception could have been practised in this instance, I was most anxious to see the reptile killed; but the charmer said he would not have it destroyed; that if it were injured the power he had over the snakes would be interfered with, and the next one would no doubt bite and kill him. He accounted for his easy capture by saying that this was a great holiday for the snakes, and they had been enjoying themselves. 'This one,' said he, 'is not living in this house.

He has come from his own home visiting, and has lost his way. On this account he got down a wrong hole, and I was enabled to pull him out. Nasty neighbours and abominable visitors, these cobras! I will take this snake home and feed him and make him tame.'

However, we insisted upon seeing him made harmless, or comparatively so, and directed the man to remove his fangs. This he agreed to do, and performed it in this manner: a piece of wood was cut about an inch square, and held by the charmer to the head of the snake. The reptile seized it as he had done the fowl, and with a dexterous twist of his hand the most primitive performance of dentistry was accomplished. The four fangs sticking into the wood were extracted by the roots and given to me. I have them now, and look upon them as more 'suicidally' pleasant than a pint of prussic acid or a cask of white arsenic.

Another fowl was now brought and attacked by the snake as before, but without any effect; it shook itself, rustled its feathers, and walked away consequentially. It is alive still, unless some enterprising culinary agent has converted it into 'curry' or 'devil.'

So it was proved beyond any doubt that an Indian snake-charmer was not a 'humbug and swindler,' as many suppose, but a strong-minded, quick-eyed, active, courageous man. The cool determination and heroism of the charmer in the present instance was rewarded by the sum of two rupees (4s.); and he left the compound with an extra snake in his basket, thankful to 'his preservers and feeders of his children,' as he styled us, and to whom, he said, he owed his life and his existence.

J. J. P.



THE GULLIBILITY OF MAN.

NOT long since, a case of swindling before a London magistrate made known the fact that a livery-stable-keeper—a man with some opportunity of learning the habits of society—had actually lent a man five shillings and paid for two glasses of gin and water at eleven o'clock in the morning, on the representation that he was Lord John Russell in a great hurry to hire a carriage to go down to Windsor.

A humorous friend of ours while boasting of the success of some absurd poem he had published, gravely said the Queen Dowager was so much pleased with it that she sent him a very friendly note, to say she should like to make his acquaintance, and if he came near Bushy Park, she trusted he would slip in and take a glass of sherry.

This, of course, was a jest; but the following, which would betray no less ignorance of the manners and customs of the royal family of England in the middle of the nineteenth century, was no jest at all; but we can honestly venture to record it as evidence of the extraordinary degree of ignorance which is compatible even with age, experience, and fair standing in society.

A retired naval officer, apt to boast at the expense of truth, a man of good property and standing in the society of North Devon, who also possessed landed property in the Isle of Wight, actually described over a dinner-table a half-hour's haggle he pretended to have carried on face to face with her Majesty about some fields adjoining Osborne, which fields, he alleged, her Majesty wanted to buy too cheap; but he plainly told her Majesty that happy as he should be to oblige her, 'land was land now-a-days, so we parted without a deal.'

The remarks we have to make upon man's gullibility we preface with these instances of ignorance because where such ignorance is possible, credulity and imposition must of course be possible to the same extent. And whenever anything occurs to startle us with the credu-

lity of the world, we shall find, on consideration, that error is traceable to one of two distinct principles.

The first is, that the standard of probability is at fault; the dupe is a poor observer of reality and a bad judge of truth. The *vraisemblance* of the French, or the *verisimile*, the 'truth-like' of the Romans, are more expressive words than our word 'probable.' These words remind us that probability depends on resemblance to the truth; and, naturally, persons who have an imperfect knowledge of the real must also be bad judges of the counterfeit. They may argue rationally, but from wrong data, which lead them to ridiculous conclusions.

The second cause of credulity is, that the greed of money, or other violent passion or affection of the mind, makes us see through a delusive medium. We see only one side of the matter, the mind being dragged so forcibly in one direction that we cannot see the other.

In the latter case, it matters not how 'sensible and sane on other points' may be the victim of the temporary hallucination, for it is not a question of wit but of attention; and Bishop Butler very wisely observed, 'though a man have the best eyes in the world, he can only see the way he turns them.'

In all the notable instances of imposture on the one hand and of credulity on the other, we shall find the two sources of error centering in one and the same person.—We may trace a degree of ignorance of men and manners and of the way persons in any given state of society, rank, or character, act under particular circumstances. We may trace, also, a state of mental delusion, an impatience of testing a made-up story even by the little experience that the victim happened to possess.

In the last novel* by the author of 'Twenty Years in the Church,' the plot turns on the clever devices of one Hannah Hengen, a very remarkable adventuress. The scheme

* *Dragons' Teeth*. By the Rev. James Fycroft. 2 vols. At Booth's, Regent Street, and all libraries.

is so remarkable, that the author vindicates the probability of his story by saying that 'he pledges himself that, from his own limited experience, he could name no less than three adventuresses who severally victimized gentlemen of good standing and worldly experience by stories yet more easy to detect.

Having reason to believe—especially from some remarks in the press while reviewing this popular story—that some curiosity has been excited on the subject, we are happy in being favoured with the following account of the three 'facts stranger than fiction' to which the novelist referred.

I. A friend of the author one day told him that an extraordinary adventure in real life, with which members of his family had been nearly connected, happened in the manner following:—

One day, about twenty years since, at the end of the session, as Mr. Salter, an Irish Member of Parliament, was returning home by the London and North-Western Railway, he became much interested in the conversation of two of his fellow-travellers—a young officer with a lady companion. When the train stopped at the Wolverhampton station, the officer came up to Mr. Salter and said, that, however strange it might seem, he was encouraged by his profession to reveal to Mr. Salter circumstances personal to himself and lady friend. The fact was, they were both on their way to Gretna Green: the lady was flying from a brute of a father who, because she would not be persuaded to sacrifice herself and fortune to some very objectionable suitor, had used her so ill that she did not dare to return to his house again; while the young officer was fired with love ennobled by pity, at once to rescue a charming girl from the extremity of misery, and (of course he promised himself) to raise her to the serenest altitudes of mortal bliss and joy without end.

'Well, well!' said the M.P., 'no man alive is more ready than I am to help a fine fellow in a strait like this. But—but—you know what

the world is made of; you know business is business: there are some ordinary forms and precautions in use among men of the world, and therefore, not that I really suspect anything for a moment, all is so simple and artless; but the long and short of the matter is, I must just, *pro forma*, have the satisfaction of hearing the sad case you relate, and asking a few questions of the lady also.

The story of the fugitive lady seemed to the openhearted M.P. as simple, as ingenuous, and as transparent as that of the gentleman; and—as a striking corroboration of the description which the officer had given of the suddenness of the determination to elope—the lady had no luggage of any kind! Young runaway ladies do usually secrete a bundle by help of the waiting-maid, but one pocket-handkerchief and one parasol formed the complete inventory of the lady's superfluities. The officer related that he met the lady of his love that very morning in Rotten Row, attended, as usual, by her maid, and from painful information from that maid received, he had hurried the ill-used lady all in a moment to fly from the cruel designs of her most unnatural father on the wings of love and—the London and North-Western Railway.

The Irish gentleman was quite excited by the tale. He was also, like his countrymen in general, delighted at the dash of adventure and the romance of the movement. What Irishman's sympathies ever failed to take part with those who show themselves superior to the stupidities of order or of law?

'My purse,' he said, 'is at your command, but unfortunately, at the present moment, there is nothing in it. All I can say is, come over with me to Dublin, I then can get at my money. This unavoidable delay, however provoking, will, at all events, baffle all imaginable pursuit, and Gretna will be reached without further impediments of any kind.'

The officer and lady accepted the kind proposal, accompanied this friend in need to Dublin, and received cash quite equal to their necessities,

The good friend's wife also volunteered her assistance, and lent articles from her wardrobe to obviate the inconveniences of so precipitate an expedition.

As soon as we had heard the story so far, we naturally anticipated that the end of the matter would prove to be, that the Irish gentleman never saw his money, and that his good lady's wardrobe remained minus all the garments so kindly supplied. But not so. The money was punctually repaid and the wearing apparel was as honestly returned. That there was a dupe in the case was true enough; but that dupe was the *officer*, not the friend.

For the officer conducted his bride to his father's house; and as soon as time had been allowed for some kind of overtures to the relatives of the runaway lady, to appear only reasonable, all parties were surprised at observing that there was a continued refusal on the part of the lady, who every day found some fresh reason for delay when offers of intercession were forced upon her. At last, some one remarked that never once, in the morning's distribution of the contents of the letter-bag, had there been a single epistle for the bride—albeit, a lady of fortune with a wide circle of family connections. 'Surely all her relatives and friends could not be so implacably offended; and if so, displeasure finds its vent in words as often as in emphatic silence.'

When suspicion is once excited, the days of imposture are few indeed, and the bride was soon compelled to confess that she had no father, cruel or kind; that she had no fortune, and—it was readily concluded—she had no *character*; and her pretended 'lady's maid' as little as herself.

And what became of the unhappy officer who had linked himself to an abandoned woman for a life?

Most fortunately, a rigid investigation of her antecedents elicited that she had another husband living; so the second marriage was void; and the threat of a prosecution for bigamy gave the family little trouble for the future.

II. The second case of successful imposture to which the author of 'Dragons' Teeth' alludes, he has related thus:—

Some years since, while living in the city of Chester, I became acquainted with a Mr. Buller (this name will serve), an Oxonian, about three-and-twenty years of age—a member of an excellent family, who was reading for holy orders. He was a man of excellent character, of some accomplishments, especially music, and was generally much esteemed as a man highly honourable and utterly incapable of deceit by all who knew him. After about a year, he went to visit his father and mother—persons of middle age and of ordinary intelligence and worldly experience; and during his absence, a report reached Chester that Mr. Buller was engaged to be married to a ward in Chancery, a lady of noble family and of immense estates in England, with chateaux and wide domains in Italy also.

In course of time, Mr. Buller rejoined his Chester relatives, but only for a visit of a few days, and brought his intended wife and introduced her to my family as among the most intimate of his friends in that city. The morning after, he visited us alone, was very communicative, and related incidents in the lady's history more like a romance than sober truth. However, the more strange this adventure, we felt, the more impossible that he could be deceived; for, as to staring improbabilities, where we believe the narrator, we naturally think, no one would dare to mention them if not true. Still, everything seemed to set at defiance the experience of our lives as also the evidence of all our senses.

1. The lady, he said, wanted a few weeks of being of age, although she seemed to us five-and-thirty at least; but—she had survived an illness so remarkable, and had also an accident which resulted in diminishing the bloom of her youthful features.

2. The lady was an accomplished musician; her singing and playing were the envy of professors; but—just at that time there was a reason that she could not give even her intended husband a sample of either.

3. She was an excellent linguist, but—when some ladies from the Continent addressed her in French as naturally as they would speak English, she drew back at once; she did not deem it consistent with the etiquette of high life to parade her accomplishments by talking French in English society.

In short, a mystery hung over everything: if Lord Eldon (he was then Chancellor) knew—for so she persuaded Mr. Buller—what he was doing with so wealthy a ward, above all, if he dared to marry her before she was of age, he would be imprisoned for contempt of court.

It so happened that the Marchioness of Conyngham was at that time announced as spending a few days in Chester; whereupon the lady exclaimed at once, 'I must avoid all the leading streets, for if the marchioness only catches a glimpse of me, she will tell Lord Eldon to a certainty and we shall be undone.' The end of all was, Mr. Buller was tricked into marrying a woman whose connection with the peerage and extensive estates will best be understood if we say she had once been a servant in the family of Lord —.

This adventuress deceived not only one young man but all his family, carrying on the imposition over a period of many months. She was even working coronets on a baby's robe when the imposture was discovered! Mr. Buller and his family were as select in their society as most country gentlemen, so it has always been unintelligible how this woman ever attained a position even to attempt so audacious a deception.

III. The third instance of marrying under a mistake, which the author of 'Dragons' Teeth' had in view, happened about twenty years since in the west of England, and at that time supplied points for repeated application to the law courts for setting aside the marriage, but we believe without effect. This case may be more briefly told, though it resembles the plot of the novel aforesaid more nearly than either of the other instances.

A merchant of middle age had, unhappily for him, provoked either

the mirth or the malice of a female relative—Mrs. Clyde—who determined to practise on his credulity by taking advantage at the same time both of his vanity and his greed.

It was well known to the merchant that an heiress of large estate was living in Steep Street. With this lady, Mrs. Clyde pretended to have become acquainted; and, being quite her confidante in affairs of the heart, gladdened the ears of the merchant with the news that the heiress had set her affections upon him, fired by his mere looks—a case of love at the very first sight.

The only personal communication the bridegroom-elect could be allowed, was on one occasion to kiss the hand of the lady through a half-opened door.

The connection between Mrs. Clyde and the heiress, who in reality was quite a stranger to her pretended confidante and go-between, was established to the satisfaction of the gentleman in a very ingenious way. While Mrs. Clyde and the gentleman were passing the lady's house on one occasion, the lady was observed at the window. In an instant Mrs. Clyde said she would just run in and bring him a few words in the lady's handwriting. Accordingly, she knocked at the door, ran in past the servant, as if quite intimate, saying, 'Your mistress, I see, is in the drawing-room,' pretended that she and the clergyman of the parish were collecting for coals for the poor, and with an apology for the sudden intrusion, said that the loan of pen and ink for one moment would oblige. Pen and ink were produced, when Mrs. Clyde's hand, she said, was too numbed, and 'would you be so kind as to write these few words for me?' From that hour all chance of suspicion was obviated, in this vital point, at all events.

The end of all was that the merchant met at the altar, and plighted his troth, 'for better, for worse, till death us do part,' to a bride enveloped in a thick veil, which veil was no sooner thrown off than it revealed the well-known features of—a fishwoman!

Mammas and daughters may learn a useful lesson from these three stories. Such imposition, involving misery for life, it has been proved is possible, even where there is no love to charm with siren spell, no passion to drown the voice of reason—none of that blissful hallucination which makes all the hours between the 'offer' and the wedding, hours of the heart, but not of the head; hours during which we have seen even a lady of half a hundred years in a mood to credit everything from her hoary-headed lover, deaf to the warnings of all the world besides.

Affection of all kinds makes men gullible, because it blinds them. The folly of parents with their children is so proverbial that *fond* and *foolish* have become convertible terms. Most romantic and marvelous stories in a court of justice have been traced to the creative powers of a parent's mind; leading on, step by step, some wicked, lying child who had wit enough to adopt the suggestions of leading questions. For nothing is too improbable for a parent to believe, in excuse for a child.

It is commonly remarked, 'If persons would dispassionately consider; 'If they would honestly consult their own sense,' and the like.—But on any question vitally affecting us, it is not so easy to think dispassionately. Do you doubt it? This shall be the proof: How seldom do persons really ask advice; how much more frequently do they only ask for confirmation? Every lawyer will tell you that the very client who comes for an opinion invariably rather argues than consults, and so pertinaciously conceals or glosses over the very facts on which any impartial opinion can possibly be formed, that it is often hard to torture and to wrest them from him. And could not the Mentor within the breast tell the same story? Can we imagine that we are ever likely to advise with ourselves at all more honestly than when we consult our lawyer or our friend?

The reason of this preposterous folly is, that a man never takes the trouble to consult or ask advice till he is already interested in one con-

clusion; and that interest draws the mind aside so forcibly in one direction, that he proves utterly impatient of being made to look in the other.

In the three cases related, the greed of money, as well as conceit and self-love, supplied the delusive medium. Of all dust to throw in a man's eyes there is none like gold dust. The very news of a fortune to be had almost for the asking; the lottery prize, the opening of the millionaire's will, or the ventures of California—the very thoughts of such golden visions will throw even sober-minded people off their balance in a moment. In the times of bubble manias, more brains have been turned by fortunes gained than by fortunes lost; and every season of speculation proves again and again that, if once you quicken the pulse—if once you fire the minds of men by the prospect of sudden riches, and the earnings of a life all grasped within an hour—so all-engrossing is the object, that there is no limit to a man's credulity about the means of realizing it. It is true now, as in the days of Thucydides, that in all such exciting moments, men will only talk one way; and whoever is bold enough to talk the other is at once set down as disaffected, or at all events as a very disagreeable sort of fellow.

One fact in the merchant's history singularly illustrates a very common fallacy—one that has hoodwinked many a dupe. When Mrs. Clyde had been seen to run like an intimate friend into the rich lady's house, this confirmation of one point was taken as a confirmation of all; so very slight a matter will satisfy us of what we wish to find true. In looking for proofs, men are too ready to generalize. After cracking one or two nuts, though chosen by the audacious seller, we too fondly believe well of the rest.

While, then, we are so ready to deceive ourselves, who can wonder at the success of any imposture, where others are artfully flattering and inflaming our own self-love, and leading us on in the very direction in which we are already too prone to go?



DR. JOHN BLACK,
EDITOR AND POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

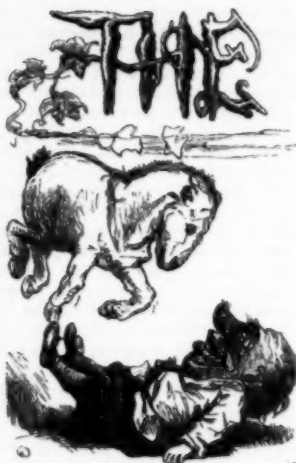
See "London Papers and London Editors."



DR. JOHN BROWN,
Author of "The Principles of Medicine."
The "Principles of Medicine" and "The Principles of Surgery."

London Papers and London Editors.

NO. IV.



'Times' first began to shoot ahead of its contemporaries, both in the amount of circulation and in the influence it exercised on public opinion, about the year 1820. We have already referred to the part which Walter and Barnes took in elevating it to the commanding position it then gained, and which it has never since then ceased to occupy. But there was a third coadjutor who in his way was as efficient as either of the two others, and without whom it is probable the success of the paper would not have been so brilliant, nor the distance with which it overpassed all other competitors so marked and complete. This third member of the trio was Captain Sterling, the principal leader-writer in the journal, and for many years popularly known as the 'Thunderer' of the 'Times.'

Edward Sterling was born at Waterford in the year 1773. The future vigorous denouncer of corruption and jobbery was destined to illustrate one of the most flagrant instances of political jobbery in his own family and person. His grandfather was Clerk to the Irish House of Commons at the time of the Union; and as the extinction of the local parliament deprived the clerk of his emoluments it was decided that he should be compensated by a pension equivalent to the sum the Union deprived him of. To this there was of course nothing to object; but as all offices were held in reversion in those vicious days, Mr. Sterling found means to induce the Government to believe that this office, which was so convenient for himself, had been, or might, or ought to have been secured in reversion to his son and his grandson after him; and the pension was accordingly continued, not only during the life of the original holder, but for the two lives that succeeded him, and only expired on the death of the great political essayist in 1847. It may be said in excuse for him that he was ready to fulfil the duties of the office if there had been any to fulfil; but even that poor pretext would hardly have availed his father, for he entered the Church, though he never advanced higher than to be a curate in the Cathedral of Waterford, where, as we have intimated, his son was born. Young Edward was destined for the bar, and was in due time entered at Trinity College, Dublin, to pursue his studies in that direction. When in his twenty-fifth year the Irish rebellion broke out, and that event gave a new direction to the whole course of his life. His family, as may be inferred from the position of the grandfather, were ardent loyalists, and the grandson threw the whole force of his excitable, impulsive nature into the ranks of authority. He was among the first to join a volunteer corps which was formed from among the Inns of Court—a service which was a very different affair then from what it has become in our day. There was no need for sham fights in those days, for the foe was in the land, and the volunteer regiments were hurried forward, as fast as they could be formed, into the battle field. Their drill and discipline might be little more

than elementary, but at any rate it was on a level, if not superior to the condition of the raw levies of peasantry who had been in too many cases goaded into rebellion by local tyranny. Young Sterling marched with his regiment, and encountered the rebels in several skirmishes, besides taking an active part in the victory so dear to Orangemen under the name of Vinegar Hill. These incidents fired him with military ardour, and he soon afterwards obtained a captain's commission in a Lancashire militia regiment then quartered in Ireland. A militia regiment, however, was not exactly the post he coveted, and soon afterwards he and his company volunteered into the line. Their services were accepted; but it must have been extremely mortifying to the young military aspirant to find that he was embodied in the 8th battalion of reserve. While waiting for the opportunity of another exchange into a position where he was likely to see more active service, the tide of war rolled for the moment in another direction; the necessity for maintaining reserves appeared to the Government to have passed away; Sterling's regiment was disembodied, and he was placed upon half-pay. This seems to have quenched Mr. Sterling's ardour for a military life, and he retired with his half-pay and his unearned pension to the cultivation of a small farm in the Isle of Bute. The place appears to have commended itself to him not so much from the quality of the land or the lowness of the rent, as from the fact that the farmhouse was in part a fragment from the old baronial castle, and gave the owner the appearance, in the eye of the world, of living in greater state and dignity than an ordinary farmer could pretend to do. It may be easily guessed from this that the actual work of the farm was not very congenial to the tastes of this grandiose, ostentatious Irishman, and that, this being the case, the farm itself soon ceased to be a prosperous concern. He managed, however, to retain the favour of his landlord, the Marquis of Bute, and on giving up the

Kanes Castle Farm in Scotland he was transferred to a cottage, uncumbered with any land, upon the marquis's Welsh estates in Glamorganshire; and there, by the favour of his kind patron, he was appointed to the adjutantcy of the Glamorganshire Militia—a situation which added still further to his settled income. Hitherto he had been making experiments in life; and though none of them could be pronounced successful, they had not turned out such dead failures as experiments made on so momentous a question, and persisted in for so late a period in life, generally do. At each remove he had continued to add a little to his scanty income; but the great aim of his life, the achievement of a brilliant place in society, was still unsolved, and he was like a blind prisoner groping along the walls of his dungeon hoping he might find some exit. And now he was on the eve of deliverance. Being relieved from all necessity for action, except so much as the duties of his adjutantcy imposed upon him, he was fain to relieve the overflowing of his restless mind by the employment of his pen, and here at last he found his true vocation. In 1811 he wrote a pamphlet on military reform, which he dedicated to the Duke of Kent. That pamphlet does not appear to have made much sensation either in military circles or elsewhere; but he followed up this first essay in authorship by a series of letters on the passing politics of the day, which he sent to the 'Times,' under the signature of 'Vetus.' The anxiety with which he regarded these ventures was described in later years by his son, the well-known John Sterling, who told his friend and future biographer, Mr. Carlyle, that he well remembered how his father used to walk out in those days to the hill above his house, there to watch the coming of the London mail. His son was too young then to understand the nervous and tremulous anxiety which his father displayed on those occasions, though he came to know afterwards that the difference between the London newspaper continuing or omitting the

letters of 'Vetus' was the difference between his father becoming a famous man and a power in the State, or remaining for life eating his heart out amid the solitudes of Llanbethion. There was no cause for anxiety, however. The letters were duly inserted, and in due time came offers of further employment and an invitation to London, both of which, it is needless to say, were eagerly accepted. The value that was put upon the services of the new contributor may be inferred from the circumstance that as soon as the abdication of Napoleon and the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent to Englishmen, Captain Sterling—for he never abandoned his half-pay military title—was sent over to Paris to assist in describing the brilliant scenes of the Allied occupation and the return of the Bourbons—a vocation that was suddenly and most disagreeably cut short by the return of Bonaparte from Elba, when the captain, with his wife and family, had to make a hasty flight to England. He did not return after Waterloo. His merits were still more clearly recognized by the keen eyes of Walter, and he was soon installed as one of their best and most frequent leader-writers.

The career of Captain Sterling in this new capacity embraced some of the most stirring scenes of modern political history. The dearth and consequent discontent that followed the war—the clamours for Radical reform—the demand for Catholic Emancipation—the Reform Bill—and the great reaction which followed the establishment of that landmark in modern history, all in turn came under his notice, and were illustrated by his flashing and slashing pen. In all of them he rode triumphant on the top of the highest wave, and seemed to lead while he was actually borne along by the force of the popular opinion. His articles had the rare merit of always hitting the public taste and falling in with the current humour. The tact which was shown in discerning the first faint indications of the changing tide, the skill with which he kept his finger on the popular

pulse, and noted down every phase and variation in the rate of its beating, display a sagacity that would have made the reputation of a diplomatist, and is marvellous when considered as the work of a quick, impulsive, excitable man. There are those, indeed, who deny that any part of the merit was his beyond the brilliant and picturesque style in which these changing opinions were clothed. Their theory is that the real merit is attached to Barnes, who really watched and noted down the ebbs and flows of popular opinion, and who, having discovered in Sterling a pipe of marvellous compass, governed all his stops and ventages, and sounded on him what notes he pleased. They add that Sterling was very slow to take in new ideas, and that his inspirers had often great difficulty in getting him to take the cue which they wished him to take, but that once caught there was no further difficulty—the invective roared and poured and dashed in a continuous torrent. To some extent there may be ground for this theory. It is certain that when the 'Times' did execute its great wheel from the support of the Reform ministry it was done reluctantly, after several warnings, and must have engaged the frequent and anxious deliberations of those concerned in its management. But it is a very shallow view of human nature to suppose that the brilliant exponent of this change was himself unaffected by it, cared nothing about it, and was ready to write with equal force on any side his patrons might espouse. There was a vehemence—almost a ferocity of tone shown in his leaders, which proved incontestably that the writer's whole soul was in his work. And Sterling was just the man who would feel disappointment and chagrin at the course taken by the Reform ministry most strongly. He who had hoped the most from their advent to power would be the least likely to make allowances for the difficulties in their path, and the most prompt to charge them with insincerity and treachery. Such was the view taken of his course. Thomas Car-

lyle, who frequently met him in society, and whose powers of reading character few will be disposed to deny, in his 'Memoirs of John Sterling' thus discourses of the oscillations of opinion in the 'Times,' and its brilliant writer:—

'The sudden changes of doctrine in the "Times," which failed not to excite loud censure and indignant amazement in those days, were first intelligible to you when you came to interpret them as his changes. These sudden whirls from east to west on his part, and total changes of party and articulate opinion at a day's warning, lay in the nature of the man, and could not be helped; products of his fiery impatience, of the combined impetuosity and limitation of an intellect which did, nevertheless, continually gravitate towards what was loyal, true, and right on all manners of subjects. These, as I define them, were the mere scorie and pumice wreck of a steady central lava flood, which truly was volcanic and explosive to a strange degree, but did rest, as few others, on the grand fire-depths of the world. Thus, if he stormed along ten thousand strong in the time of the Reform Bill, indignantly denouncing Toryism and its obsolete, insane pretensions; and then if, after some experience of Whig management, he discerned that Wellington and Peel, by whatever name entitled, were the men to be depended on by England,—there lay in all this, visible enough, a deeper consistency far more important than the superficial one so much clamoured after by the vulgar. Which is the lion's skin; which is the real lion? Let a man, if he is prudent, ascertain that before speaking;—but, above and beyond all things, let him ascertain it and stand valiantly to it when ascertained! In the latter essential part of the operation Edward Stirling was honourably successful to a really marked degree; in the former, or prudential part, very much the reverse, as his history, in the journalistic department at least, was continually teaching him.'

Sterling's nature was of that kind that he could not live without

an idol. His disappointments in men never dimmed the brightness of his faith in man. Having dethroned Lords Grey, Brougham, and their companions from the pedestals which they had occupied in his heart of hearts, it was natural that he should look about for another. He had not far to seek. Sir Robert Peel, no longer the leader of a dominant oligarchy, but the chief of a shattered and dismembered band, who were only saved from utter despair by his words of cheer, and whom he was striving patiently and perseveringly to mould together into the consistency and cohesion of a party, was just the kind of hero that was fitted to attract his admiration, and to call forth his most fervid enthusiasm. He became his champion, his advocate, his untiring and most effective defender. No man hailed his advent to power with warmer congratulations than Edward Stirling; none shouted more lustily for fair play for his government when he took office in 1834-5; none more vehemently denounced the manoeuvres by which he was removed from office within a year of his taking it. Whether a more lengthened tenure would not have been as fatal to the reputation of the new idol as the three years of office had been to the old, may be doubtful; but there can be no doubt that all through that short but fierce struggle of parties, the Conservative minister found his most effective support next to his own skilful and ambidextrous management, in the anonymous writer, who day by day thundered forth on his behalf in the columns of the 'Times.' Peel's own sentiments on this point are happily on record, and as they form a curious episode in newspaper history, it will find its natural place here. The letter of Sir Robert transmitted to the 'Times' had been handed by the editor to Captain Sterling, as the person most entitled to the thanks so warmly expressed; and among his papers it was found, after his death, along with the draft of the reply, which had evidently been intrusted to him to draw up. We believe the letter itself first

saw the light in Carlyle's 'Life of John Sterling.'

Private—To the Editor of the 'Times.'

'Whitehall, April 18th, 1875.

'Sir,—Having this day delivered into the hands of the king the seals of office, I can, without any imputation of an interested motive, or any impediment from scrupulous feelings of delicacy, express my deep sense of the powerful support which that government over which I had the honour to preside, received from the "Times" newspaper. If I do not offer the expressions of personal gratitude, it is because I feel that such expressions would do injustice to the character of a support which was given exclusively on the highest and most independent grounds of public principle. I can say this with perfect truth, as I am addressing one whose person even is unknown to me, and who, during my tenure of power, studiously avoided every species of intercourse which could throw a suspicion upon the motives by which he was actuated. I should, however, be doing injustice to my own feelings, if I were to retire from office without one word of acknowledgment—without, at least, assuring you of the admiration with which I witnessed, during the arduous contest in which I was engaged, the daily exhibition of that extraordinary ability to which I was indebted for a support, the more valuable because it was an impartial and discriminating support.

'I have the honour to be,

'Sir,

'Ever your most obedient and faithful servant,

'ROBERT PEELE'

'To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., &c.

'Sir,—It gives me sincere satisfaction to learn from the letter with which you have honoured me, bearing yesterday's date, that you estimate so highly the efforts which have been made during the last five months by the "Times" newspaper, to support the cause of rational and wholesome government which his Majesty had intrusted to your guid-

ance; and that you appreciate fairly the disinterested motive of regard to public welfare, and to that alone, through which this journal has been prompted to pursue a policy in accordance with that of your administration. It is, permit me to say, by such motives only, that the "Times" ever since I have known it, has been influenced, whether in defence of the government of the day, or in constitutional resistance to it; and indeed there exist no other motives of action for a journalist, compatible either with the safety of the press, or with the political morality of the great bulk of its readers.

'With much respect,

'I have the honour to be,

'Sir, &c. &c. &c.,

'THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."'

Sterling died, as we have mentioned, in 1847, and his place has never been filled up.

While the 'Times' was thus illustrated by Barnes and Sterling, the 'Morning Chronicle' proved itself no contemptible rival under the auspices of Dr. John Black. Black, like so many of the early lights of the newspaper press, was a Scotchman, born in the little border town of Dunse, and educated at the University of Edinburgh. In or about the year 1806, he came to London, having resolved to make literature his profession; and for some years he obtained a precarious livelihood as a translator and hack writer to the booksellers. In the course of a few years he obtained an introduction to Perry, and received an appointment as one of the reporters of that paper. His acute discrimination, and his solid acquirements, soon made themselves conspicuous, and procured congenial employment for their possessor. In 1817 he was appointed assistant-editor; and on the death of Perry, in 1821, the sole responsibility of the newspaper was placed in his hands, and retained by him till 1843. For twenty-two years, therefore, at a critical period of modern history, Dr. Black had a large share in shaping the politics and moulding the opinions of the Whig party, to which he attached

himself. It must be said of him, however, that he was then what would now-a-days be called an Advanced Liberal. Under his guidance the 'Morning Chronicle' advocated bolder and broader views of political questions than it had done under the mild and jovial-tempered Perry. On those subjects that were purely political indeed, he never proceeded so far as to break away from the bulk of his party; and the 'Morning Chronicle' remained, all through Black's management, the recognized organ of the Whig party. But in those questions of a moral and social nature which were then just beginning to force themselves upon public notice, and which may be called the neutral ground of all parties, Black became conspicuous as the advocate of the most extreme opinions. In the 'dreary science' of political economy he was a willing pupil, and a frequent exponent of the theories of Ricardo, Malthus, and the other sages of that branch of science; and there can be no doubt that the circulation of the paper was somewhat checked, though its influence among the thinkers of society was heightened by the often-repeated exposition of those opinions which were 'caviare to the million,' and which, as far as they were understood, were rather distasteful to the ordinary class of readers. It is said that much of this was due to the influence which James Mill, the historian of India, exercised upon the mind of the editor. The two Scotchmen lived in the same quarter of the town, and were in the frequent habit of meeting and of walking together. Congenial tastes rendered them intimate, and the higher and harder nature of Mill soon asserted its predominance over Black. The editor became the pupil of the philosopher; and these sworn and sincere friends of the people conversed together on principles and adopted views of society, in which, as rendered in the editorial columns, the mass of the people had no sympathy. The days of the popularity of free trade had not come; the artisans had no objection to the free importation of food, but they resented the application of the same principles to articles of in-

dustry—which were then equally protected—as freely as we have seen the Coventry ribbon weavers resent the French treaty in our own days. The Malthusian theory was unpopular from the beginning, never had the ghost of a chance of obtaining popularity, and in our days of extended commerce and wide-spread emigration has died a natural death. But the most unpopular topic of the day was to attack the old poor law. That law was regarded as the palladium of the labouring man's liberties; and as the daring speculations of the new school of philosophy had ventured to call in question its economy and wisdom, it was natural that the opponents of the law should be stigmatised as hardhearted, unfeeling men, sycophants of the rich, grinders of the faces of the poor, men whom it behoved every Englishman with a heart in his bosom to oppose, persecute, and put down. Those who remember with what an insane vehemence the alteration in the law was assailed by the 'Times,' under the inspiration of the late Mr. Walter, may imagine how fiercely the battle was fought at an earlier stage of the controversy; those who do not, will find some amusing specimens of it in the publications of William Cobbett. Cobbett was as ardent a friend of the people as either Black or Mill, but his friendship started from a different point, and led to a very different result. He cared little for their elevation in the moral scale; his advocacy was mainly directed to an increase in their material comforts: that the labourer should have his jug of beer and his hunch of bread and cheese, with a joint of meat now and then, and, over and above all things, that he should be saved from the miserable doom of eating potatoes—that was the labourer's paradise as it appeared to the eyes of William Cobbett; and we need not add, that such a vision readily commended itself to the bulk of the labourers themselves. With these views, it may easily be conceived how he would regard the more austere, but, as we now believe, the higher vision of the labourer's future, set forth in the columns of the 'Morning

Chronicle.' Cobbett's pen has rarely been matched in the power and passion of scolding. We believe passages might be picked out of his writings which would bear a comparison with Timon's celebrated curse of Athens; and the whole venom and vitriol of his style was concentrated on the head of the 'Scotch feelosopher,' Dr. John Black. He is never weary of holding him up to reproach and ridicule. 'The Register,' 'Twopenny Trash,' the 'Evening Post,' in fact, all the publications he started during this period, are filled with the same subject—abuse of the man's erroneous principles, and their exposition in the Whig organ. The image of Dr. Black, indeed, seems to have haunted him; for whatever topic he may have begun to write about, it is rare indeed but that in some way or other, he contrives to introduce a fling at the Scotch editor. This is amusingly illustrated in one of his best known and still popular works, his 'Rural Rides.' The work contains many a sweet bit of description, many a piece of vivid word-painting, setting bodily before the eye the rich English landscape of our southern and south-western counties. But the best of these descriptions are often disfigured by a sudden and savage attack upon the bugbear of his thoughts. Is he describing a state of comparative comfort in which he found the labouring population — 'Now, Dr. Black, this is the condition of the people that your hardhearted system would break up.' Or has he stumbled upon a village remarkable for its ignorance and wretchedness — 'Now, Dr. Black, how would your "feelosophy" deal with a case of this kind? Refuse them all work-house relief, I warrant, and give them instead lectures upon the good of education and the curse of marriage.' The object of all these rabid attacks, in the mean time, went calmly on his way, not deigning to reply to the showers of abuse that were weekly discharged upon him. His own style, it must be owned, was hardly of the kind which would commend itself to the public. It was modelled upon that of his friend

Mill, than which it would be difficult to imagine anything more severely didactic, or less enlivened with the play of fancy or gleams of humour. Full of matter his leaders always were, grappling most fully with the subject on which they professed to treat; and what he gave himself in this way he scrupulously exacted from his coadjutors. His great complaint against those writers who sought for employment on his staff was, that they did not 'bite' on their subjects; and if this were often repeated, employment would not long be forthcoming for them on the staff of the 'Morning Chronicle.' The consequence was, that the paper was, even in its best days, rather admired than enjoyed; it was quoted as an authority rather than adopted as a companion. During his reign the paper once or twice changed hands; but each new purchaser respected the abilities and high-hearted principles of the editor, and he was undisturbed in his position. The first of these changes occurred soon after Black had become editor, when the paper was sold for 42,000*l*. Some years afterwards it again changed hands, Mr. Easthope—afterwards Sir John—being one of the principal proprietors. It must be noted, to Black's credit, that though there was no trace of sentiment or fancy in his own composition, he was not slow to discern or averse to honour it in others. Dickens was a reporter on the 'Chronicle' while Black was editor. The genius of the young gallery man was early discerned by the hard, dry editor; and Dickens's papers—the 'Sketches by Boz'—were first given to the world in the columns of the 'Evening Chronicle'—a late reprint of the morning edition. Most, if not all, of them were written in the sub-editor's room of that establishment: and to the latest hour of the existence of that ill-starred journal, the people employed upon it used to point with pride to the table—a plain, unwieldy machine, as all newspaper belongings are—at which Dickens was wont to sit, while his fancy revelled in the scenes portrayed in these sketches, and even his rapid pen—it is said he could transcribe

his notes of reports at the rate of a column an hour!—could scarcely keep pace with the outpourings of his vivid imagination. Another name, too early lost to literature, owed its first friendly help to Dr. Black. Angus Bethune Reach, a native of Inverness, and an alumnus of Edinburgh University, suddenly had his prospects clouded by domestic calamities, and came up to London, nearly penniless, to push his fortune. Other employment failing him, he bravely set to work in that lowest grade of literary employment—a penny-a-liner. In this way he earned for some time a precarious livelihood, till the great fire of the Tower took place. It was just the occasion which afforded room for the display of Reach's vividly-descriptive powers. His account of the conflagration was accepted at the 'Chronicle,' as at most of the other papers. But Black was not content with its insertion. He was struck with the powers displayed in the narrative, and was satisfied that the writer was capable of better things. He sent for him, offered him a regular engagement on the newspaper, which Reach retained through all future changes of management till his untimely death in 1853.

The termination of Black's own connection with the 'Chronicle' was curious and characteristic. We have already intimated that he had not the quick, versatile, ambidextrous power which more than any other man is essential to a newspaper editor; his mind ran in one groove, and from that groove the busy world appeared to be moving away. The proprietors were beginning to be dissatisfied with his management, admitting it to be excellent in itself, indeed, but no longer that which the temper of the new age required. It was said, however, that the catastrophe was precipitated by a curious incident. It was the proud custom of the proprietors of the great Whig journal to give an annual dinner to the gentlemen engaged on their establishment, and to invite some of the leading Whig parliamentary celebrities to attend the festival. On one occasion the

feast was graced with some of the statesmen who had held office in the Cabinet before Sir Robert Peel cut short the thread of Whig official existence. When their hearts were merry with wine, one of these magnates proposed the health of the proprietors, making sundry graceful allusions to the important place they filled in society, and the importance of their property as an enlightener and guide of public opinion. One of the firm—not Sir John Easthope—acknowledged the toast, expressed himself duly grateful for the compliments which he evidently thought, however, were not undeserved, and then wound up by proposing the health of the editor. It is possible that Black was nettled at the order in which his health had been placed—possible, too, that he fancied the proprietor took more credit to himself for the influence of the paper than was properly his due; at all events, he astonished the company by following up the proprietor's remarks on the importance of newspaper property, by an *ad hominem* illustration, which was felt to be singularly out of place. 'Yes,' said the Doctor, 'there is no doubt of the importance of the newspaper press, or the advantage which a connection with it brings. For instance, there are you and I, Mr. —' (turning to the proprietor who was panting with the effort of delivering his speech): 'we both came out of Scotland about the same time, with barely a sixpence in our pockets; the only difference between us was, that I had shoes on my feet, and you had none; and yet our connection with the newspaper press has helped us into the worshipful society of Lords and Cabinet Ministers.' It was about the only joke the man ever made—and the dearest. Very soon afterwards the world was informed that Dr. Black had ceased to be editor of the 'Morning Chronicle.' He lived in the enjoyment of learned and well-earned leisure for several years afterwards.

A minor newspaper writer, but one who made some noise in the earlier career of Black, and Sterling, and Barnes, was William Jerdan. He has taken care that the world,

or at least that portion of it which devours all the issue of the circulating libraries, should know a good deal about him, his character, and his adventures; for after the fashion of sundry other second and third class authors, after all other sources of literary interest failed, he coined his own life into money, and published his autobiography. Queer, rambling, gossiping, egotistical books the most of them are, in which a good story, or a curious bit of local history, or some half-forgotten incident of parliamentary warfare is found overlaid with heaps of rubbish. Jerdan's is no exception to the general class; but in the earlier volumes there is a good deal of information about newspaper men, and newspaper work, over which the reader skims pleasant enough, if only he can at the outset surrender himself to the illusion that of all the men there described, Jerdan was foremost—of all the scenes he was the hero.

William Jerdan was born at Kelso, in Roxburghshire, where his father, a local magnate, established a newspaper for the purpose of upholding the good old cause of Church and King. The journal still survives, and is, we believe, still the property of the family. William Jerdan may therefore be said to have been born in the midst of newspaper work; and after some abortive attempts to begin life, both as a merchant and as a lawyer, first in London and afterwards in Edinburgh, he finally found his way up to London again, and gravitated towards the press. One of his earliest engagements was upon the 'Aurora,' a daily newspaper that was started about the beginning of the century by the hotel-keepers of the West End. These gentlemen had observed the success which attended the establishment by the licensed victuallers of the 'Morning Advertiser,' and they aimed at the establishment of a journal which should be as much superior to the Radical paper, as their own showy and pretentious hotels were to the dingy public-houses in the City. But they must have had strange notions of newspaper management. Their first

blunder was in the choice of an editor, whom they seemed to have selected more on account of his familiarity with their bar-parlour than his literary qualifications. He is thus described by Jerdan: 'Our editor was originally intended for the kirk, and was a well-informed person; but to see him at or after midnight in his official chair, when writing his leader, was a trial for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, or newly laid down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung with the chin on his collar-bone as in deep thought—a whiff—another—a tug at the beer—and a line and a half or two lines committed to the blotting-paper. By this process, repeated with singular rapidity, he would contrive, between the hours of twelve and three, to produce as decent a column as the ignorant public required.'

Perhaps it was to Mr. Jerdan a conclusive proof of the ignorance of the public, that when he became editor of the 'Aurora,' the public perversely refused to admit that that made any difference, and deserted the journal in such numbers that the proprietors dropped it altogether. Neither Mr. Jerdan nor any one else, however, could have made head against such insane management of the committee, as he describes in the following sketch:—

'Our Aurorian establishment went on very well for a while, but as the great morning paper recently observed, "If you want anything spoiled or ruined, you cannot do better than confide it to the management of a committee." The truth was exemplified in the present case, and proof afforded of what I have always seen since that period, namely, that there must be a despotic power at the head of a periodical publication, or it must fall to pieces. Now, our rulers of the hotel dynasties, though intelligent and sensible men, were neither literary nor conversant with journalism: thus, under any circumstances, their interference would have been injurious; but it was rendered still

more fatal by their differences in political opinion, and two or three of their number setting up to write "leaders" themselves. The clashing, and want of *ensemble*, was speedily obvious and detrimental; our readers became perfect weather-cocks, and could not reconcile themselves to themselves from day to day. They wished, of course, to be led, as all well-informed citizens are, by their newspaper; and they would not blow hot and cold in the manner prescribed, for all the coffee-room politicians in London. In the interior, the hubbub and confusion of the republic of letters was meanwhile exceedingly amusing to the looker-on. We were of all parties and shades of opinion; the proprietor of the "King's Head" was an ultra-Tory, and swore by George III. as the best of sovereigns. The "Crown Hotel" was very loyal, but more moderate. The "Bell Inn" would give a strong pull for the Church, while the "Cross Keys" was infected with Romish predilections. The "Cockpit" was warlike—the "Olive Tree" pacific; the "Royal Oak" patriotic; the "Rummer" democratic; the "Hole in the Wall" seditious. Many a dolorous pull at the porter-pot, and sapientious declination of his head, had the perplexed and bemused editor, before he could effect any tolerable compromise of contradictions for the morning's issue; at the best, the sheet appeared full of signs and wonders.

'Public vacillation and internal discord soon produced their inevitable effects. "Aurora," "the pride of the day," passed her meridian and began to get low in the horizon. Her gold scattering turned out to be rather an artistic fancy in painting her than a substantial reality. I had succeeded to the uneasy post of editor on the exhaustion of the pot and pipe; but vain were my efforts, and the darkness of night overtook the bright divinity of the morning.'

Mr. Jerdan afterwards found his way to the 'Morning Post,' and was for some years employed on that establishment. It was while engaged as a reporter on this journal,

we believe, that he witnessed the tragic fate of the Prime Minister, Mr. Spencer Perceval. At that time there was one entrance from the street for members and strangers, and Mr. Jerdan, who, of course, does not fail to communicate the fullest details of what he witnessed, relates how he was in the act of pushing open the swing door that opened into the lobby, when he observed the Prime Minister coming up the steps immediately behind him. To give precedence to the minister, holding open the door to allow him to pass, was a natural act of courtesy, repaid by a smile and a cheery nod from the man who was stepping forward to his doom. While in the act of turning round to close the door, Jerdan heard the report of a pistol, and turning sharply round, he saw the man who had passed him in high health the instant before, stagger into the arms of a bystander. He never spoke more. Jerdan, with another man, seized the assassin, and he secured the pistol, which he retained till it was given up at the coroner's inquest. But the newspaper work on the 'Morning Post,' on which Mr. Jerdan most prided himself, was the part he took in the trial of the Duke of York, at the instance of Colonel Wardle, for the illegal sale of army commissions. We need not revive the details of that scandal; it is enough to say, that the general impression on the public mind was that the duke was guilty. That impression the 'Morning Post,' as the court and fashionable paper, set itself to dispel; and they employed Mr. Jerdan as the most efficient writer for the purpose—with what success may best be told in his own words:—

'Of my writings in the "Morning Post," the most effective, in one sense, were a continuation of "leaders"—as editorial comments are designated—pending the memorable charges brought by Colonel Wardle against the Duke of York, and sustained by the evidence of Mary Ann Clarke. In these I made an abstract of the parliamentary proceedings, from night to night, and earnestly maintained the cause

of his royal highness against all corners; denouncing the conspiracy against him, and exposing the misdeeds of his enemies. I am not now going to revive the question, nor give my opinion of the measure of weakness on one side, or falsehood on the other. Surely did the duke prove the truth of the poet that "Our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us"—as certainly and more severely than our crimes; but the appeal has been made from Philip drunk to Philip sober; and I believe that history will clear the accused from all the grosser stains with which party and malicious revenge laboured so fiercely to blacken his character. But be that as it may, the tide of popular resentment ran far too strong at the time to allow of any resistance. The outcry was too loud to admit of any other voice being heard; and though I shouted as vehemently as I could, it would be inconsistent with truth to assert that I succeeded, to any extent, in arresting or modifying the overwhelming current of condemnation and censure. On the contrary, I do not believe there is an instance of any journal sinking so rapidly in its circulation as the "Post" did, in consequence of my able and spirited articles. In the course of a fortnight I reduced it by more hundreds per diem than it would be expedient even now to state; for I am persuaded that the effects of my lucubrations were not only so potent, but so permanent, that the paper has not yet recovered its former condition. That the work cost me great toil and trouble is not to be disguised. I remained in the House of Commons every night during the whole debates. Thence I went to the office and did my best and worst for the next morning's publication, and then, generally about three o'clock in the morning, I walked from the Strand to Old Brompton, a fair three miles. One way and another, I had my mind engaged, and my pen in hand about nineteen hours in the twenty-four, and, let me say, the exertion was extraordinary. Towards the conclusion it was so overpowering that

I literally learnt to walk in my sleep, and could, on my way home pick out the most convenient portions of the road to take a nap *en passant*. Thus, between sleeping and waking, a pint of mulled Madeira, and a bit of dry toast, reinvigorated me for the resumption of my task in three or four hours.'

From the 'Morning Post' Mr. Jerdan found his way to the establishment of the 'Sun' newspaper, where he continued for some time. Here for the first time, if we except the brief and disastrous period of his editorship of the 'Aurora,' he was intrusted with the sole management of the newspaper. With amusing frankness he tells us of the brilliant anticipations he had formed of his future career; and for a time it seemed as if these anticipations were about to be realized. We may see in his case that the period had arrived when editors and newspaper writers were enabled to associate with the statesmen whose conduct they undertook to defend, on terms of greater equality than in a former age.

Mr. Jerdan had attached himself, in his capacity of political writer, to the fortunes of Mr. Canning; and it will be seen from the following extract that the great man admitted him to a large amount of familiarity and confidence. He says, in the opening of his second volume—

'I had been slightly acquainted with Mr. Canning for some years previous to the date at which my first volume closed, but various circumstances, deeply gratifying to me, conspired about this time to advance this condition into an intimacy which has been the delight and pride of my life.

'My residence was close at hand, and every Sunday after church I was expected at Gloucester Lodge. If the weather was fine, we walked for an hour or two in the garden, if wet, we sat and conversed in the library.

'Under such circumstances, utter sincerity was a natural and certain result; and out of this grew our bond of union and friendship. It might be chance or position which

throw me in his way; but, however it happened, he entertained an idea that it was useful for a politician and a minister to learn as much as he could of the opinions of various classes of the community upon the measures of government and other subjects of interest to the country; and he was aware that I mixed much in the society of intelligent men of every description—literary, agricultural, mercantile, professional, busy, and idle.

'Founded on this was his desire to have such frank and candid colloquies with me; and which he nobly repaid me by equal unreserve and cordiality. Let any one imagine the happiness of this! I was flattered by the thought that I was rendering some service to the man I so dearly loved; and his communications to me in return exalted me into the consciousness of being one of the best-informed individuals in the empire. There were few things beyond the limits of cabinet secrecy which were not freely confided to me.'

Trouble was in store for the editor nevertheless — trouble, not from without but from within. The 'Sun' was subject to that bane of newspaper property, a divided proprietary. One of the proprietors was Mr. John Taylor, a gentleman of some literary and strong theatrical tastes, the author of a once well-known, though, we fear, now more than half-forgotten farce, 'Monsieur Tonson.' Mr. Taylor kept his co-proprietors in such continual hot water that they at last agreed—so Jordan represents it—to clothe him with despotic power as editor, and to give him a share in the property of the paper. This had hardly been accomplished, however, when the other proprietors sold their shares to Taylor, leaving Jordan and him to fight out the battle between themselves. Under these circumstances Jordan's conduct, even on his own showing, was about as unwise as could well be conceived. He says there was no conciliating his opponent—he certainly never tried. Taylor had from the first been opposed to Jordan's appointment; it seemed that he would afterwards have been content

if he had been allowed to write in the newspaper now and then, and to have some voice in its management; but this Jordan positively refused. Not content with making the printing office and the editor's room the scene of daily turmoil, they must needs call in the public as witness to these disputes. The battle was fought with great spirit both in verse and prose. On one day correspondents were informed that 'all communications for the "Sun," newspaper must in future be addressed to the sole editor and part proprietor, William Jordan.' In a few days afterwards the bewildered correspondents were again informed that 'Mr. John Taylor, the chief and resident proprietor of the "Sun," requests that his friends will address all communications intended for insertion to him only at the office.'

These bickerings went on for some time, and they culminated at last on a worthy occasion—the marriage of Lord Byron. Taylor, who was an admirer of the bard, inserted in the 'Sun' the following sonnet:—

SONNET.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD BYRON.

'Byron, whose spells imagination bind,
And storm or smooth the ductile heart at will,
Ah! since the muse can paint with equal skill,
Each bold or softer trace of human kind,
Rapt in the glowing energy of mind,
Let not the scenes of woe and danger still,
'Whelm us with anguish, or with horror chill,
For sure thou now canst fairer prospects find.
And since benignant Heaven has joined thy fate
To worth and graces all who know admire,
Led by the virtues of thy honoured mate,
Devote to happier themes thy potent lyre,
So may ye share on earth a blissful state,
Till both, resigned in age, at once expire.

(Signed) T.'

'I disliked,' says Jordan, 'this indifferent composition, not only for its poetical demerits but for its bad taste, as I conceived, in meddling with private life, and its inconsistency in so highly eulogising, whilst pretending to advise an individual whose productions had been criticised in a different spirit in the same paper.'

'That I did not act prudently in manifesting this sentiment, I am

ready to admit; but next day there appeared in a corresponding place at the head of a column, the subjoined

PARODY

On a Sonnet to Lord Byron in the 'Scx' of yesterday.

'Byron, whose spells imagination bind,
Strange spells which turn the silly head at will,
Ah! since thy muse can paint with equal skill,
Thy Prince a 'Vice' or father most unkind;
(Rapt in the glowing energy of mind.)
Let not the plans of rage and faction still
'Whelm us with falsehood, or with rancour chill,
For sure thou now may'st fitter subject find.
And since the parish priest has joined thy fate
To one thou must, since all who know admire,
Led by thy nose, pray moderate thy hate,
And tune to loyal themes thy shameful lyre;
So may ye share on earth a safe estate,
And not exalted in the air—expire.

(Signed) W. J. EXTENFORD,
'Poet Laureate.'

Taylor, who was out of town when the parody appeared, returned in a highly-excited state, and inserted another notice to correspondents, abusing the editor for the mean advantage he had taken of him when his back was turned. By this time it seemed to the friends of both parties that if the quarrel went much further, it would end in the total ruin of both, and the destruction of the property in which they had an interest. The Chancery suits to which they had had recourse were withdrawn, and Jerdan was persuaded to sell his share, as he says, at a great loss. He then withdrew finally from newspaper work, and started the 'Literary Gazette,' the first weekly literary journal that had been attempted in the country.



FOOTBALL AT RUGBY, ETON, AND HARROW.

CHAPTER I.

A MATCH ON THE 'OLD BIGSIDE' AT RUGBY.

'COME down to-morrow,' wrote my friend Rugbiensis, who, like every other Rugbeian, is an enthusiastic football player; 'we are very strong this year, and the Old Boys are to bring a mighty team. It will be a regular Rugby *guerre des géants*. We mean to win. Come and see us, old fellow.'

I accepted the rather imperious invitation, and went to Rugby accordingly. Whether I did see the students win is another matter, which will appear hereafter.

When I called a cab in the Strand next morning, and directed the driver to Euston Terminus, the street lamps were all burning, though it wanted but an hour of noon, and behind the wet glass of the shop windows dull red lights were dimly discernible. London was enveloped in a dense fog. Day-break had, as far as the metropolis was concerned, been the merest farce, and, as the morning advanced, the fog had thickened, and got yellower, and more opaque. It was thick enough and damp enough to choke me, I thought, as I applied a vesuvian to my meerschaum, and began to smoke, as a preventive measure and very commendable proceeding under the circumstances, though the time was morning, and the place the Strand. What a charming day for football! I said, communing with myself, and retreating as far as possible into the rear of the hansom; but I knew they would play. I really believe the football players of the public schools would continue their game if, in the middle of a match, the heavens opened and sent down the schoolboy-talked-of shower of 'cats and dogs.' The players would tuck up the sleeves of their bright-coloured jerseys, and proceed to declare, according to custom, that the *scrummages* were jollier than ever. Nothing in the way of weather short of a frost

that makes the turf as hard as flag-stones, and falls, resulting in broken bones, is heeded. Rugbiensis would never have ceased to laugh at my effeminacy if I had stayed at home on account of fog and rain.

I found the departure platform thronged with gentlemen whose destination was the same as my own. A large number of them held black bags in their hands, but no one would have suspected the bags of containing 'samples,' or their owners of representing houses in the City. They didn't look like 'commercial.' Not a bit. They were waiting for the train. Some were pacing up and down the platform; others congregated in little knots. All the talk was of football matches, past and to come. The black bags were stuffed with flannel garments, and their owners were members of that mighty team of 'Old Boys,' as my correspondent so unceremoniously designated the gentlemen who were to form one of the contending sides in the great match of Old v. Present Rugbeians.

Daylight broke upon the train as we emerged from the last of the London cuttings. Those 'eligible carcasses' of houses, which, somehow, are always to be seen in the remote suburbs through which the first mile or two of the London and North Western line runs, and which always appear to be in the same forlorn, windowless, skeleton condition, became distinctly visible, and behind, like a huge black mantle resting on the steeple tops, lay the dense fog which was turning London day into night. The prospect forward was sufficiently disagreeable. We were not yet in the open country. Rain was falling, and there were endless heaps of rubbish, and blocks of unfinished houses, and the sky was of a dull leaden colour. It was, in short, just that kind of day which, according to foreign writers, has an

influence on the British mind that tends greatly to increase the returns of the Registrar-General, and add to the work of her Majesty's coroners. I put up the window, settled myself comfortably under my rug in the corner, and thought of—well, to be candid, I thought of a subject neither more nor less weighty and serious than the matter of this article.

Football is a very ancient English game, which was for many years a very popular pastime of the people. It is a charming one, admitting of great skill and dexterity, and requiring equal agility and promptness of action. It is peculiarly adapted to our national character. How, then, does it happen, especially as we have no substitute for it, that it has fallen from a national game into the pastime only of a few aristocratic colleges and schools? The answer is not difficult to find. There have never been any general rules established for regulating the play. The effect of this has been to do very effectually what Edward III. failed to do with the aid of a royal edict, when he thought football and some other games were interfering too much with the practice of archery. Every football club either played without laws, or made its own. Individual players took whatever latitude they chose. They carried the ball, they kicked each other, they fought, and did that which was considered so reprehensible on the part of Mr. Heenan on a recent occasion, and nearly strangled one another. There was, in short, no end to the violence of the players in many districts, and the results were often very disastrous.

Shrove Tuesday was the great football day in England. In some places the people who would not turn out to play were roughly treated, either in person or property. In others, before the game began the ball was carried from house to house, and money was demanded. There is no doubt that in many cases it was given because it was found to be cheaper and more convenient to give to the football players than pay to the glaziers. In travelling through rural districts on Shrove Tuesday, as late as the

early part of the present century, it was quite a common thing to find doors and windows barricaded up. Women had to stay at home, and travellers to avoid any place where the ball was. The sides were generally parish against parish, or, in cities, the men engaged in rival trades would contend against each other. The goals were frequently the parish churches or alehouses. The scenes at these contests led, in many cases, to the interference of the law, which ultimately stopped them. In others, the players seem to have wearied of the disputes and fights.

It is thus that football has fallen into its present position. A great revival seems at hand now. It is still popular in some districts. The Sheffield 'grinders' are noted for their games at football; and it is practised in other localities. But wherever it exists, there is still the same want of unanimity in the laws, and there are such wide distinctions between the methods of play as render it quite impossible for a number of avowed football players from different schools, or different counties, to play together. Hence it is that the famous football players of Rugby, Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and other schools, never play against each other. They cannot do it. The Eton and Winchester games have something in common, and an attempt was made during the present season to arrange a match between the two colleges, but it was abandoned, on account of the differences. Wykehamists and Etonians, Rugbeians and Harrovians, cannot meet between the goal sticks in winter as they do upon the cricket ground in summer. The scholars are, nevertheless, much more enthusiastic partisans of football than of cricket.

The universities play football a great deal, and have many grounds for it. Some of these are appropriated to the Rugby system, which is now the most popular of all; others to the Eton and Harrow games. They have no common game and common ground. They play matches only with players from their own schools, parties of whom go to the

universities, and the universities, in return, visit the school ground. The players under the different systems cling to them tenaciously, and, of course, every one 'sticks up' for his own game, and, as is but natural, considers it the best.

Everybody is supposed to know what football is, and any one asked would declare it was a very simple winter game, all there was to do in it being to kick the ball between two sticks. When put in practice, it is found more complex than cricket, and that as many as forty rules are not found too many for it. There is that number in the Rugby code. The great questions are, shall the game commence with a *kick off* or a *bully*, or not? Shall the ball be taken up and carried, or caught, when kicked in the air? What is *off side*? and what is *on side*? Shall there be a *cross bar* for the ball to be *kicked over*, as at Rugby, one for it to be *kicked under*, as at other places, or never an one at all, as at Harrow and Eton? Are *hacking*, *charging*, and *tripping* legitimate? Those are only a few of the leading questions which many players have tried to answer, but they continue to be differently interpreted at the different centres of the game.

The shrill whistle of the engine cut short my deliberations at this stage, and a minute later we entered the Rugby station. Rain was falling, but the fog was far away.

Rugby! It was a horse fair. Did anybody ever go to Rugby when it was not a horse fair, or a cow fair, or a cattle fair of some kind? when the doors of those old-fashioned houses were not blocked up, and animals with plaited tails, and manes tied up with straw, were not tethered to the blank walls, and chains not stretched from post to post to keep free about twelve inches of footway? I never was so fortunate. If I were a schoolboy again, and the question were put to me, For what is Rugby noted? I should, in all probability, answer, For sleek farmers, greasy butchers, graziers, and cattle; and I might add, as an afterthought, its school.

I picked my way as best I could. It was by no means an easy matter,

and there was a great jumble of dialects and jingling of money in leathern bags. However, I reached Laurence Sheriff Street, and turned into it.

Good old Laurence Sheriff! Best of grocers! I was glad to see his name—albeit, the letters were tarnished, and the board somewhat rusty—at the corner of the lane. It keeps him in the memory of the boys, and prompts the new ones to ask who Laurence Sheriff was. His 'Free Grammar School, for the parishes of Rugby and Brownsover,' has developed itself, and grown to goodly proportions; and, thanks to the eight acres of land in what is now part of the W. C. postal district, but was only a portion of Lamb's Conduit Fields when he gave it, it has been found quite possible for his pious wish, that the master should, 'if convenient,' ever be a Master of Arts, to be observed. I should like to run down and see the old people in his almshouses too; but the little boys, with eager and expectant faces, who hurry past me, say, 'calling over' is finished. The clouds have lifted a little, and it is time I was in the school close.

The school close is the playground of the Rugby students, and a fine one it is too, studded with grand elm-trees, and covered with well-worn turf. A stranger might think the effect somewhat marred by the goals erected in every direction, and looking, as Tom Brown says, like so many places of execution. The Rugby goal-posts and cross-bars are something like a gallops; but the old Rugbeians, who are so plentiful in the close to-day, know better, for they have spent many an hour endeavouring to drive the ball over them. What pleasant reminiscences hang about the place! Walking round, before the match begins, you may observe many a graybeard looking up at the old elms, counting them once more, perhaps, and growing eloquent upon the subject of his school days and school exploits, pointing out to the fair girl, his daughter, who leans upon his arm, the tree where he sat in summer shade, and first read the 'Arabian Nights,' or the spot where

he fought a desperate battle with a schoolmate. A little sadness mingles with these memories of long ago, and the eyes are quick to detect alterations and changes. There are meetings and recognitions of men who were schoolboys here together, but who have been widely sundered in later days; divided by parties and pursuits, and some between whom have been for long years the wide seas. For among the visitors on the day of the 'Old v. Present Rugbeians' football match, you may see not a few of even famous men. Waterloo veterans, Indian heroes, travel-stained and worn to look upon, but green at heart still, have been known to revisit the school close on this day; and you hear constantly the names of the old masters, who have long ago gone to their rest, spoken with loving and reverential tongues, and the names of schoolfellows who have since become reverend dignitaries, great statesmen, men of fame in the world of letters, who were football-playing boys here in this close.

There is a little shouting, which announces that all is ready, and everybody turns to the 'Old Bigside,' which is that portion of the close where the great matches are played. At the school end are two perpendicular posts, 18 feet high, with a cross-bar at 10 feet from the ground. Opposite these, at about 130 yards, is a precisely similar erection. The ground is about 70 yards broad, and is defined on all four sides by the removal of a narrow strip of turf. The visitors keep outside these lines. Within them are eighty players in football costume. These are divided into two sides, easily distinguishable by the difference in their bright-coloured jerseys. A fine group of fellows they are. Among them are boys and young men, and not a few who have reached the meridian of life. The ball is brought in. Unlike the balls used by other schools, it is not round, but oval, and larger, made of stout leather on the outside, and inflated india-rubber within. The Present Rugbeians have won the toss for choice of goals, and have the wind in their favour. The old

ones have the privilege of the *kick off* in consequence of this. The captains have sent four trusty men thirty yards to the rear, and still others are detached from the general body of 'up-players,' or 'forwards,' to act as *half backs*, and skirt the *scrummages*. Now the two sides divide, each facing the other's goal, it is easy to see that strength lies with the Past Rugbeians, whose colour is red. Popular sympathy, as usual, is on the weaker side, and everybody hopes the blues will win. The player deputed to make the kick off, which is from the centre of the ground, steps back a short distance. All the eighty players are perfectly still till the moment the ball has been touched by the toe. Then they leap into life, and the game has fairly begun.

The object is to kick the ball between the two goal-posts above the iron bar. The side winning two games out of three wins the match. A player who is nearer his opponent's goal than the ball, is *off* his side, and is not allowed to take part in the play until the other side has played the ball. Now let us follow the game. The kick off drove the ball over the heads of the forward players, who wheeled round to follow it, their opponents rushing forward at the same time. One of the half backs caught the ball as it bounded. This is allowable at Rugby, though not on other grounds. Immediately he had it in his hands, he started off at full speed towards his opponents' goal, but his adversaries ran full tilt at him. He evaded the earliest by skilful *dodging*, putting his toe in front of theirs, and tripping them up, but was eventually surrounded, and a general *scrummage* ensued. *Scrummage* is a Rugby definition that very adequately describes what followed. About thirty of the players on each side wedged themselves together, the player, who held the ball, being in the centre, his adversaries endeavouring to take it from him, his own side to get him free, and all the outsiders trying, with the aid of kicking the shins of their neighbours, and pushing, to get to the ball. After a time the struggle became hopeless, and the cry '*Have*

it down, was uttered by the holder. Then the ball was loosed, but the circle was too compact for it to get to the ground, or for players to see where it was for some time. Vigorous kicking eventually cleared the legs away, and the ball burst out of the ranks of the 'forwards,' and was followed and kicked, now near one goal, now near the other. Again and again it was caught or taken up while bounding, the player in each case starting for his adversaries' goal, being leapt at, and pulled over, or, as the Rugbeians term it, *mauled*, the spectators crying 'Bravo!' 'Well kicked!' or 'Bravely charged!' *Scrummages* were of frequent occurrence, and always exciting. I marvelled to see the little boys leap up at running men and cling to their necks till both rolled over together, and others came up and kicked the ball on. The ingenuity in leaping, twisting, and stooping, the turning and turning and still going on, was wonderful to behold. The players were too breathless to talk, if they had been inclined, which they were not. There was no rest; from side to side, and from end to end, the ball went with astonishing rapidity, now being kicked, now carried, now struggled for, almost fought for, till a vigorous kick drove it out at the side bounds under the elm trees. Then there was a pause, and the players wiped the perspiration from their brows, while one player brought the ball back to the edge, where the two sides gathered, forming themselves into two lines, each with their faces towards their opponent's goal. The player who stood beyond the goal line tossed the ball between these two lines, and up went a forest of hands to catch it, and another *scrummage* ensued, from which the ball was driven down to the school goal, and taken up by a back player and carried across the line, and then touched down between the posts. Whereupon the excitement greatly increased, for a *try at goal* was to follow. Before this, though, the ball had to be placed on the ground, just *within* the goal line, and kicked gently up into the hands of a player standing ready to catch it just *without* the goal line. It was his duty

to make a mark on the turf with his heel as soon as he had caught the ball, and before he had done this the other players might charge him, or set upon him, and take the ball from him, and thus prevent the *try at goal*. The head of the side took care of all this, and chose his man for the work, and the moment the ball was caught the heel was kicked into the turf, and behind that mark the defenders of the goal had to stand until the ball should again touch the ground. Then the head of the side commissioned one player to take it out, and another to make the 'try.' Even then the 'try' was not quite sure. If the player who had to carry it from the goal line to the spot where it was to be deposited for the kick had touched the ball with two hands, it would have been lost. It was carried a convenient distance from the goal by one player, and another went to kick it. Some of the players remained near the goal line to keep guard over their adversaries, the young Rugbeians, who, in their excitement, were considered likely to encroach a little, ready for the desperate charge they would make directly the ball touched the turf.

This taking the ball out for the try at goal was a very deliberate and solemn proceeding. Arrived at what was considered the best distance, and due calculation for the effect of the wind having been made, a little hole was knocked in the turf by the heel of the player who carried it. The one who was to make the kick then retired three or four paces beyond it. Every eye was upon him, and all was excitement, both among spectators and players. 'Now;' and the ball was deposited in the little hole. At the same instant the player deputed to the honourable post of making the 'try,' and who gave the signal for placing the ball, ran forward, and delivered a tremendous kick full on the ball. A moment's delay, and it would have been too late, for the players on the other side rushed forward, ready to fall upon him—all except a few who were near goal, in the hope of being able to touch the ball in its passage, which would render it null. But

the hope was a vain one, and it went flying full five feet above the cross-bar, clearly between the posts, an undisputed goal for the Old Rugbeians.

Then the sides changed goals, and a new game began, just as the old one had done. Several times victory seemed in the hands of the younger players, who were cheered on. But they could not get a goal, though they struggled bravely. The players appeared to have only just got their spirits into the game when a clever drop kick brought it to an end in favour of the 'Old Boys' without the ball having crossed the goal line, as in the previous game. It was just after a boldly-contested *scrummage*, close by the elm trees, which, in the words of Tom Brown, 'come into the play; that's a tremendous place when the ball strays there, for you get thrown against the trees, and that's worse than any kick.' No Rugbeian forgets those elm trees: the *scrummages* which take place near them are, for the very valid reason given by Tom Brown, among the most desperate. It was after one of these that an old Rugbeian caught up the ball and rushed away towards his opponents' goal, upsetting players who tried to stop him, and evading others, till he came to within an easy distance of the goal, when he dropped the ball, and, as it fell, delivered a kick that sent it spinning through the air over the cross-bar.

This is the Rugby game of football. All through the winter months for nearly two hours daily, vacations and frosts only being excepted, some hundreds may be seen playing it in the school close. At 'punt about,' which is very similar, a dozen balls may often be seen going at once: the bright colours, the rapid evolutions, and the dexterity of the players makes the scene a charming one. No player has, as cricket scouts have, occasion to stand still. The work provided for each is vigorous, and well adapted to the cold air of the season in which it is played. The detractors of this system as distinguished from others say it is too violent, that carrying the ball has no business to

be permitted in football, that kicking shins, and tripping up, and pulling over are too rough. The players do not think so, and they ought to be judges. There is, however, one rule in those printed and circulated at Rugby which is rather calculated to astonish those who do not know what the game is in practice. It says, 'Though it is lawful to hold a player in a *maul*, this holding does not include attempts to throttle or strangle, which are totally opposed to all the principles of the game.'

CHAPTER II.

IN THE 'FIELD' AT ETON.

Football in the 'Field' at Eton is a very different game to that played in the school close at Rugby. Two forms, or rather varieties, of football are played by the Eton collegians. The ground for one is at the 'wall,' and that for the other is 'The Field,' where all the great matches take place. In these matches there are but twenty-two players, instead of seventy or eighty, as in the Rugby game, and there is no cross-bar to the goal posts, and catching or holding the ball, and, consequently, running with it are not allowed.

Let us suppose the college clock has just announced a quarter past twelve; that it is a mild winter day; and that you, reader, and I have turned from the lane into the 'Field.' In the centre of the ground, on the green turf, are congregated the twenty-two players; other collegians are scattered about in groups, discussing the forthcoming athletic sports; one or two who are in training for the races at these sports are taking their mid-day *quantum* of exercise. Merry jokes are passing round; one is challenging another to an impromptu race; others are wrestling a little, or leaping; and the small boys are kicking some old footballs about at the edge of the ground. All this ceases as the four strokes denote the half-hour. The twenty-two players remove their coats, and rush down to the goal sticks to

hang them thereon; then back into the centre, where the ball is put down. It is a large ground, and posts mark the corners and sides, and the goals are only defined by two slight poles seven feet high and eleven feet apart. The football costume serves admirably the purpose of showing the muscular development, the broad, healthy chest, and the generally fine frame which denotes strength. We have a capital opportunity of observing these things as they come down to dispose of their coats; and the well-proportioned, symmetrical frames of some of the players remind us of the gladiators, they are so well set, and there is such an absence of superfluous flesh. Football contributes not a little to this. The training of the playground at these colleges and schools, the continual round of vigorous exercise, rowing, running, leaping, football, and cricket, is as valuable physically as the training which goes on within the college walls is mentally.

We have no time, however, for more than a passing thought on this, which is suggested to us as one after another reaches out his arm and leaves a coat on the goal post. Play is just about to begin. Each side has sent one of its fleetest runners and best kickers to keep the goal. He at our end has taken up his station only a yard in advance of the goal-posts. Two more are detached as *cornerers*. The remaining eight players on each side form themselves into two walls—living walls. The ball as yet lies some distance from them. The players on each side stand two deep; the strongest form the first rank. The others lean upon them, ready to impel them forward. Each side is facing the opponents' goal. Heads are bent down, and shoulder is placed to shoulder, so that they form a compact mass. One of the *cornerers* takes up the ball, and puts it between the legs of these two lines. Then the struggle begins, each side trying to bear the other down, and push the ball away toward goal. This is an Eton *bully*. There is rare work for the muscular frames we admired just now. See

how they cling together, and butt at each other; how the second line of feet are planted far back to give the outsiders force in pushing. It is one of the finest tests of strength and skill combined that has ever been witnessed. The sixteen players all move as one. Where is the ball all this time? About in the spot where it was placed by the cornerer. The struggle is not with the feet, but the shoulders. The effects of the protracted efforts begin to grow visible. The side in the violet-coloured jerseys sway backward a little—only a very little—and their feet move uneasily. That is the moment for the triumph of the other side. A couple of feet removed from the ground, and all is over. Push! Thrust! There! The bully is broken: the ball comes into sight. Some players are on the ground; others are racing along, kicking the ball gently (*dribbling* is the technical term) before their toes. The fallen players leap from the ground; the cornerers run up. There is a cry of 'No sneaking.' A vigorous dash is made at the ball; but one of the opponents has at the moment come up, and is just in time to charge the player, who has made preparations for the kick. This charge is bravely made. The two are running side by side; one stoops, and in the act of rising again brings his shoulder into forcible contact with that of his adversary, who, having one foot in the air to kick the ball at the moment, is unable to withstand the shock, and goes over on to the turf.

By this time all the players have got together, and they sweep along the ground, heads all one way, for a minute as the ball is kicked forwards, and back again as an adversary's toe drives it in the contrary direction. The rapidity of the evolutions, the sharp and continual charges, and force of the collisions between the players, who, rushing from four or five different directions at the ball, meet together, and all kick at once, are interesting to watch. Legs, of necessity, receive heavy kicks that were intended for the ball, and falls while running at full speed are not light; but the players are

ordinarily upon their feet again ere one can say 'He's down.'

The Violets have brought the ball down to their adversaries' goal-line; but the goal-keeper receives it, and his well-directed toe sends it far out into the debateable land again. Then it is kicked away to the side, where it goes out at the bounds; and when it is brought in again a *bully* like that at the commencement is formed, and the struggle is repeated, till one side gives way, or goes down.

The object of each side is to get a *rouge*. A *rouge* is obtained when the ball is kicked over the goal-line, and touched down by a player who is on the opposing side. So as soon as the ball gets free from the *bully* at the side, the violets, who have it close to the goal-line, which is defended by the players in red, rush forward and kick it over. Then a race ensues; two players are abreast. At every second or third stride one tilts at the other in the hope of overturning, and thus outrunning him, and being first to *touch it down*. But the fleet-footed goal-keeper passes both while they are making these experiments, and having taken up the ball, brings it to the goal-line, and kicks it back into the middle of the field. All the players are after it again, and it is at the goal-line almost immediately. A fleet runner has all the play to himself this time, and keeps the ball continually before his own toe, making a circuitous path to the goal-line, where he kicks it over, and touches it down; but the umpire will not allow a *rouge*, as he was not *bullied* while kicking it; that is, he was not run at or interrupted by any of the opposing players whom he outran. So once more it has to be kicked by the goal-keeper out into the field; and this time it is got away to the goal-line at the opposite end, and after a sharp struggle it is driven across the line, and a *rouge* is obtained by the Reds; for while it was still bounding, a player on that side, who took care not to be behind the goal-line when the ball was kicked there, ran forward, and having charged the goal-keeper so success-

fully as to leave him on the grass, *touched it down*.

Upon this all the spectators come round to this goal, for the *bully* that follows a 'touch down' is always a protracted and interesting spectacle. The ball is brought by the umpire, and placed one yard in front of the centre of the space marked out by the goal-sticks, and which it is the province of the players in violet to defend. The players in red face their opponents' goal, from which they are only a yard distant. The strongest among them, with his toe against the ball, occupies the first place; the others form a semicircle, the entire eleven composing it, and the whole being wedged together as compactly as possible. The players on the other side form a similar semicircle between the ball and the goal. The two semicircles close up with the ball between. Each side tries its best to overthrow the other players, one to push the ball beyond the level of the goal-sticks, and thus win the game, the other to force the ball back into the field. The struggle is a mighty one, and long continued without advantage to either side. The beads of perspiration gather on the foreheads of the players, caps are thrown off, words are but seldom spoken. Every muscle is strained in the effort to heave the opponents over. The backs are bent down, and originally the players' hands are upon their knees; but as the contest goes on they, of necessity, get moved and intertwined. The shoulders of the foremost men of each party touch, and those behind on each side lend their weight and strength. The ball is firmly wedged in among the feet in the centre of this heaving, struggling mass. Spectators move round and round, and watch with bated breaths till one side shows signs of 'giving.' This is the signal to the other for a renewed effort—a long push, and a strong push, and a push all together; for, as in the opening *bully*, the power being nicely balanced, any accident or little loss of position, if taken advantage of, will be sure to turn the scale. Such a moment al-

ways comes; the extra vigour is always manifested. Sometimes the ball is borne through the goal space amid triumphant cheering, sometimes back into the field; but it more frequently happens that the weaker side giving way goes down *en masse*, the others falling with them. Then the struggle continues on the ground. Players endeavour to crawl in or out with the ball, according to their party. Some players creep out of the writhing heap utterly exhausted; but after a minute's rest they are down again, and the struggle goes on till one side gives way, and all the players rise, declare it was 'very jolly,' and look as if they thought so too.

Such was the end of the *rouge* obtained so suddenly by the Reds; but they will, if no goals and no other *rouges* are obtained, be the winners at the termination of the one hour for which the game at Eton lasts. It is a capital plan to count these 'touches down.' Goals are proverbially difficult to get, according to all the systems. Sometimes at Rugby play will last for two or three hours on as many consecutive days without either side obtaining a goal, and be drawn at last; but this would not be the case if touches down counted everywhere as they do at Eton.

A few minutes pass in inaction after one of these struggles at Eton, but the ball is soon rolling again, and another *rouge* is being fought for; or it is kicked over the heads of the spectators at the side, and brought just within the line where a new *bully* is formed, and the old fight is fought over again.

St. Andrew's is one of the grand football days at Eton, when there are matches at the 'Wall' and in the 'Field,' and when the collegians who have left Eton for Cambridge and Oxford return to their old play-place for a match at their favourite pastime.

CHAPTER III.

FOOTBALL AT HARROW.

Looking down the London side of the hill at Harrow on to the level

meadows below, late in the autumn, while the leaves, yellow as buttercups in the soft sunlight, were still upon the elm trees, I saw a pretty semi-rural scene. Farm labourers were ploughing in adjacent fields, cattle and sheep were grazing in others. In the school grounds some two hundred boys were racing after the football, and beyond was London under a canopy of black smoke. Half hidden by the trees at my back was the church, and around me the schoolhouses. What charming memories attach to these schools, which have been the dwelling-places of men to whose words the world has since listened!

I cannot refuse the invitation to enter the Fourth Form School, to look again at the seat which Byron occupied when he first indulged his taste for poetic composition. How intimately his name is associated with the school! What Harrovian does not know the spot in the churchyard he loved so much, where, in his own words, he used 'to sit for hours and hours when a boy,' and where he once hoped to have been buried, as his daughter was? I never asked one who could not point out the spot, and was not ready to recite those four melancholy verses, 'On revisiting Harrow.' There, too, are to be seen, cut by their own hands, the poet's name, and 'R. Peel,' and 'H. Temple,' and many another since famous in the world's history. I am glad that the Harrovians honour these marks of men who have lived there, and that they have taken means to prevent their being erased to make room for others, as it is the customary fate of names written on school desks, famous trees, and ancient ruins to be.

How often Sir Robert Peel and Viscount Palmerston must have run up and down this steep hill-side! Were they football players? I have never heard that the Prime Minister distinguished himself in kicking the ball; but we all know that it is narrated by an historian that a certain Archbishop of Canterbury was considered to have been highly complimented when it was stated that he was a learned prelate

and an excellent player at football. Is there at this moment among those boys intent only upon the way the ball goes a future laureate, a Palmerston, or a Peel? What are the destinies awaiting them? The disappointments through which they will have to struggle, the difficulties that will beset them, and how will they all die? These questions always intrude themselves upon my attention when I look from the hill at Harrow down upon the playground, and see the two or three hundred happy scholars, and hear their laughter and cheers. I have known many people who, at the sight of numbers of young people, could not avoid similar speculations.

They vanish when I get to the playground and mingle with the players. Who could look at their glowing faces, radiant with good-humoured excitement, and think of difficulties they would not surmount as they did those of the game, or of death, with such unlimited health and strength, youth, and manly beauty around?

The Harrow football is simpler than that of Eton, and much more so than the Rugby game. It has not half the diversity of either. There are neither *scrummages* nor *bullies*. What are called the goals at the other schools are here denominated 'Bases.' They are twelve feet wide. There is no cross-bar, and the ball may be kicked to any height, so that it is clearly within the space marked out. The ground is one hundred and fifty yards long and one hundred yards broad. The games begin at 2'15, and continue till 3'45. Only bases count, and the sides obtaining most of these win. The matches between the Harrovians and past members of the school from the universities are great contests.

Before the game begins each captain places one of his best men at the base; umpires are appointed on each side, and they follow the game, and have to see that every player keeps on his right side, and to prevent any one kicking the ball who has infringed the rule on this sub-

ject. The game begins by a player kicking the ball off from the centre. I have seen it driven with the aid of the wind nearly the whole of the seventy-six yards between that point and the base. All is running and kicking in the Harrow game. *Shinning* and tripping up are forbidden. When the ball is driven out at the side lines it is promptly kicked in again. When kicked into the air it may be caught; and if the player cries 'Three yards,' all the others must clear away from him, and allow him to have a free kick at it. When near the bases this is very valuable; and a good player generally makes a base from it. The effect of the rule is to keep the ball as much as possible on the ground. If a catch is made so near to an opponent's base that the player who makes it can jump the distance, he is allowed to do so. But this is of very rare occurrence; and the game at Harrow is only to be won by a true kick, which sends the ball flying between the posts.

There is less violence and less variety in this than in either of the other games; but, played as the Harrovians play it, it is a charming game for the winter months, when cricket is out of the question, when rowing has not the charm it has in spring and summer, and when, in brief, almost all other English open-air pastimes are rendered impossible by our climate.

During the present season football has again become popular. It is becoming familiar to all our suburban common lands; and the clubs that make use of these have formed an association, and made a new set of rules for the game, which are very like those which regulate the play at Harrow; but under every form in which it is played the game is attractive. It is, in fact, a thoroughly English pastime, particularly adapted to the proclivities of our race, and precisely that kind of sport which will best counteract the effect of our sedentary desk and office work, as it does the bookwork of the students at the universities and schools.

J. D. C.

THE MERCHANT PRINCES OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER II.

THE DE LA POLES OF HULL.



GIVE a complete history of the De la Poles would require more than one bulky volume. Coming over with William the Conqueror, the family was one of the first to take firm root in our country, to shake off its Norman prejudices, and to become thoroughly English. Under the early Plantagenets it had sturdy branches in Middlesex, Oxford, and Devon; and some of its members, going with Edward I. into Wales, fought so well that they received a large grant of land in Montgomery by way of recompense. But it was not by fighting alone that they became rich and famous, or won honour for their country. In 1297—a year before Edward's accession to the throne—we find it recorded that William de la Pole, and some other merchants of Totnes, received a sum of 12*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.* for cloths sold by them to the Crown at the fair of St. Giles, at Winchester; and later in the same year it appears that the wools of one William de la Pole, a merchant of Rouen, were detained at Ipswich to prevent their being taken to Flanders; while in 1272 we have reference to a Nicholas de la Pole, as one of the authorized collectors and receivers of the goods of the Flemish merchants

in England. Whatever his relation to this Nicholas, it can hardly be doubted that William, the merchant of Rouen, was also the merchant of Totnes, belonging to both places, because he travelled from one to the other, after the fashion of all the great dealers of his day, buying and selling goods. This same man, also, we may with safety assume to have been the William de la Pole who settled, a few years later, in the newly-founded town of Ravensrod, at the south-eastern extremity of Yorkshire.

Ravensrod has a curious history. Originally an island, formed by the gradual heaping-up of sand and stones, and separated from the mainland by more than a mile of sea, it was for a long time used only by the fishermen of those parts for drying their nets. By degrees, however, a narrow shingly road, the breadth of a bow-shot, was cast up through the joint action of the sea on the east and the Humber on the western side; and as soon as this road was completed, the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, especially of Ravenser, an ancient port and manor on the Humber, determined to make use of it. In this way was founded the town of Odd, called Odd juxta Ravenser, and after a while, Ravenser-odd, or Ravensrod. Its convenience as a landing-place, and, at first, its freedom from civic interference, soon made it an important mart. In 1276, the people of Grimsby, on the other side of the river, complained to the king of the great damage it was doing to their trade, their loss in a year being more than 100*l.* Of this complaint no notice appears to have been taken by the Crown. But the people of Ravensrod used it in an unlooked-for way. With unseemly zeal they made it a practice—so, at least, said their enemies—to go out in boats, intercept the trading ships and fishing-smacks, and urge them to stop at Ravensrod, asserting, for instance, that while trade was there so brisk, that 40*s.* could easily be obtained for a last of herrings, the people of Grimsby would not be able to pay them half as much.

This persecution of the Grimaby-men, however, did not last long, if indeed it was every really practised. In 1361 a great flood came and compelled all the inhabitants to take refuge in the neighbouring villages. Spurn Head lighthouse now marks the site of Ravensrod, while of Ravenser there remains no trace at all.

At least fifty years before the time of the flood, William de la Pole had done with Ravensrod. Having lived and prospered in it for a little while, he died in or before 1311, leaving a widow, Elena, who soon married again—her second husband being John Rottenherring, a famous merchant of Hull—and three sons, Richard, William, and Thomas, who carried on their father's work with notable success. Of the youngest of these three we know very little indeed, and about the private history of the other two we also have but scanty information. But their public life and work are very clearly decipherable from the scattered records of the time. As far as commerce is concerned, they were the greatest men of the fourteenth century; if not the first of a long and noble line of merchant princes, at any rate the first whose history has come down to us, and whose deeds are known to have been rewarded with the public approval of their country.

Richard was born somewhere near the year 1280, William a few years later. They learnt to be adventurous of life and money amid the stirring incidents of Edward I.'s reign, often, doubtless, crossing with their father, in the largest and swiftest of his ships, to the coast towns of Flanders and France, there to meet the richest merchants in the world, and treat with them for the selling of English wool and leather, and the taking in exchange of foreign wine and timber. Those short journeys were full of peril. At any moment there was the risk of being met unawares by French or Scottish pirates, and then—unless they were strong enough to defeat their assailants, or fleet enough to be saved by flight—they could expect no pleasanter fate than

that their goods should be seized, the common sailors left hanging to the mast-head, and the masters only kept alive on account of the money that would be paid for their release. These things were bad enough under the vigorous rule of Edward I. They were much worse during the disastrous period of Edward II.'s misgovernment. And it was, doubtless, for greater security that the brothers De la Pole, soon after their father's death, removed a distance of twenty miles, to the fortified and rapidly growing town of Hull. They could not have settled in a better place.

In the history of Hull, originally called Wyke-upon-Hull, are well illustrated the growth and character of an English commercial town during the middle ages. Owned by the monks of Meaux, who themselves made shrewd tradesmen, and who knew well how to encourage trade in others, it had been a thriving mart since 1198, and doubtless from a much earlier date. The Exchequer Rolls of the thirteenth century show that its exports, consisting chiefly of wool, rough sheepskins, and prepared leather, were in some years half as great as those of London. All through that time it was a favourite resort of the great wool merchants, about one-third of them being foreigners, especially Flemings and Florentines. Perhaps it was at the suggestion of these Italian merchants, great money-lenders, and therefore men very useful to the king, that Edward I. took it under his especial protection. Be that as it may, Edward bought it of the monks of Meaux in 1293, and conferred on it a civic charter in 1296. Henceforth, with the new name of Kingston-upon-Hull, it prospered more than ever. With John Rottenherring, stepfather of the brothers De la Pole, for its most influential citizen, it received each year some fresh benefit either from the Crown or from the enterprise of private individuals. The nave and chancel of the noble church of Holy Trinity had been set up in 1270, and its splendid tower was now in course of erection, to be completed in 1312. The Augustine

monastery was on the right, at the meeting of Munk-gate and Market-place, and not far from the junction of the Hull with the Humber; the Carmelite Friary was to the left, near the modern White Friars-gate, on the road to Beverley; while the Chapel of St. Mary, near the top of Market-place, was already built or building. The wall, now for the most part replaced by the western docks and basins, had been begun, and the harbour was finished, in 1299. In 1300 a mint was put up by royal ordinance, and in 1316 was established a ferry for conveying passengers, cattle, and goods across the Humber to Barton, a more ancient town than Hull, and now rapidly increasing in importance.

Under this year, 1316, we first hear of the De la Poles as living in Hull, although it is probable they had come thither five or six years before. It was a year of such famine that wheat rose in price from 6s. 8d. to 40s. a quarter, and salt was sold at the same rate. Richard de la Pole, therefore, serving both himself and his neighbours, obtained a safe-conduct from the king, empowering him to visit foreign parts and bring home corn and other things, security being given that he would not sell them to the Scots. How he fared in the business we are not told; but from this time he seems to have steadily gained influence at court. In 1320 he was made under-butler to the port of Hull, his duty being to aid the king's chief butler in making suitable provision for the royal household. In 1322 he obtained, jointly with another, the more important office of collector of customs for the town; and the appointment was renewed in 1325, and again in 1327. In April of the latter year, two months after the accession of Edward III., he was promoted to the honourable and lucrative post of chief butler to the king. From this time he can have lived little at his house in Hull Street. He travelled with the court, which for some time was moving about between York and Lincoln; but he was still a merchant by profession, the business

being managed by his younger brother William. In July of this same year, 1327, we find William lending to the king 4000*l.* with which to fit out his first expedition against the Scots; and this was followed by a loan of 2000*l.* in August, and another of 1200*l.* in December, made in the names of both brothers. These debts, heavy even for a king to incur, were to be liquidated out of the duties on wools, woolfels, and leather, collected in Hull; and in the meanwhile, as security, William de la Pole was to have possession of that part of the royal seal known as the cocket. Under every subsequent year we find references to similar transactions. In the summer of 1325, for instance, the brothers engaged to pay 20*l.* a day for the expenses of the royal household, besides supplying as much wine as was needed, and received authority to pay themselves from the proceeds of the customs of London, Ipswich, Yarmouth, Boston, Hull, Hartlepool, and Newcastle. It became the rule for royalty to pawn its credit with such wealthy subjects as the De la Poles. For this, however, the young king was not responsible. 'Lady Isabel the queen, and Sir Roger Mortimer,' says a contemporary historian, 'assumed unto themselves royal power over many of the great men of England and of Wales, and retained the treasures of the land in their own hands, and kept the king wholly in subjection to themselves; so much so that Sir Henry, Earl of Lancaster, who was made chief guardian of the king at the beginning, by common consent of all the realm, could not approach him or counsel him. Wherefore Sir Henry was greatly moved against the queen and Sir Roger Mortimer, with a view of redressing this evil, that so the king might be able to live upon his own, without making extortionate levies to the impoverishment of the people.'

The De la Poles, at any rate, suffered no impoverishment from the levies of the Crown. Doing their business honestly, and taking no more from either king or people than was their due, as we have

every reason to believe, they were advancing every year in wealth and influence. The favour shown to them perforce by King Edward while he was in the hands of his wicked mother and her more wicked lover, was only augmented after he had taken the government upon himself. At the close of 1328, Richard received from him a Christmas present of 1000 marks, in consideration of the good services done by him; and in the following May he was made gauger of all the wine sold throughout the kingdom, his brother William being appointed his deputy. In 1330, Edward is recorded to have cancelled another appointment, that of valet of the king's bedchamber—'a situation always filled by gentlemen'—given to him against his will; but there were special reasons for this, and as next year William is referred to as the king's 'beloved valet and merchant,' we need not see in the transaction any disfavour to the De la Poles. There is everything to show their growing importance.

In 1337, Richard seems to have found it necessary to go and live in London, there to attend to his court duties. He therefore abandoned his connection with commerce, and left the whole business in his brother's hands. The document by which their partnership of twenty years' standing was dissolved, is almost worth quoting in full. It is dated July 12th, 1337. In it they first of all pardon one another for all manner of injuries done, said, or thought by one against the other, from the time of their coming into the world down to the writing of the deed; then they release one another from all contracts and mutual duties ever existing between them, save those arising out of their brotherhood, 'which lasts and will last as long as God permits;' and after that they proceed to parcel out the wealth accumulated by them. Unfortunately, we are not told the value of the whole property, or the proportion in which it was divided. It is likely that, as William had for some years had the whole of the responsibility of managing the business, a large proportion fell to him. The

portion allotted to Richard amounted to 3874*l.* 17*s.*, certainly a smaller sum, even when account is taken of the relative value of money, than we might have looked for, considering the largeness of some of the transactions already referred to. Of this, 645*l.* was reckoned to be the value of his house, while 100*l.* was set down for the cattle and live-stock in his farms, 30*l.* for his horses, and 80*l.* for his silver goods; making a total of 855*l.* Besides this, he was to collect some outstanding debts to the extent of 148*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.*; 2205*l.* was to be paid to him in cash; and for his share in the rents and possessions held jointly by the two brothers in the counties of York and Lincoln, William was to pay him either 100 marks a year, as rent, or 2000 marks once for all.

Richard lived fourteen years after his retirement from business. He retained his butlership until 1358, going over to Ireland in 1354, there to deposit certain wines of the king's, until they were needed for use. In 1335 he was made a justice in eyre for Yorkshire, and in 1336 we read that he received a reward of 250 marks 'for the expensive labours he had maintained in expediting certain affairs of the king's.' He is described as a citizen of London in 1339; and in London he died on the last day of July, or the first day of August, 1345, leaving to his heirs, besides other property, houses in Gracechurch Street, Lombard Street, and Cornhill, and assigning a large sum of money to the clergy of St. Edmund's, Gracechurch Street, and St. Michael's, Cornhill, for distribution to the poor. At the time of his death he is said to have been debtor to the Crown to the extent of 2576*l.* 12*s.*, a third of which was obtained from the merchants of Prussia, being an outstanding debt of theirs to Richard de la Pole, and the remainder was remitted by the king in consideration of his long and faithful services to the state.

In the meanwhile, William was rising to the highest honours proper to a merchant prince. In the autumn of 1332, as King Edward was proceeding northwards to begin

his Scottish wars in earnest, 'he himself,' as we read in a manuscript history of Hull, 'with several of his nobles and attendants following after, came to this town to take a view and prospect thereof, and both he and they were most splendidly and nobly entertained by William de la Pole.' In token of his liking for the town and its citizens, he transferred the local government from the hands of a bailiff to those of a mayor, nominating William de la Pole as the first to fill the post. For eight years from this time the great merchant was repeatedly employed on duties, half commercial and half political. In April, 1333, he spent, on the king's account, 40*l.* in fitting out the good ship 'Trinity of Hull,' with men and munition, for going to fight against the Scots. In June, he was sent on a special mission to reprove the Earl of Flanders on account of the aid given to the Scots by his mariners; and in May, 1335, he was sent again on a like errand. In this year, moreover, besides being chosen mayor, he was appointed improvisor of all the collectors of customs on the east coast of England, from Hull as far down as Lynn. In July, we notice that he received from King Edward an acknowledgment for 330*l.* spent in buying sixty hogsheads of wine and six hundred quarters of salt; and in November, for services described in the king's warrant as 'agreeable and useful to us, in happily expediting certain affairs that specially concern us, yet not without undergoing great and extensive labours,' he received a gift of 500 marks. In the following May another present was made to him of half that value, and in August, we learn that he fitted out and sent to Gascony, Flanders, and other parts, two of his ships, the 'Bloom,' and the 'Saint Mary,' 'on the king's business as well as his own,' for which letters of safe conduct were issued. In the same month he received the king's acknowledgment for a debt of 302*l.*; and in the following November a pardon was made out in his favour, releasing him from penalty for not having already taken arms against the Scots, according to the king's

proclamation, and excusing him from service for the next three years. In this year's campaign, however, the most peaceful man might have joined with impunity. 'At that time,' says the chronicler, 'the king made another expedition into Scotland, because the people there would keep no peace, but would always be at war. And so the king passed through the land; but the Scots always took to flight, so that no encounter could then take place. Wherefore the king was very angry, and all his people returned into England.'

But Edward was not on this account less earnest in his preparations for war. In January, 1337, he commissioned William de la Pole to build a stout galley, for which forty picked oak-trees were to be sent to him from a priory in Nottinghamshire, and in May, the merchant was sent to scour the counties of York and Lincoln, in search of fit sailors to man the same. All over England, throughout this year, people were busy building new ships, and repairing old ones, in readiness for a work only half talked about as yet. This was the attempted subjugation of France to the crown of England, an enterprise which modern students of history are learning to see in its true light, but which no Englishman living at the time could be expected to regard with anything but favour.

William de la Pole, at any rate, was not tardy in supporting the scheme. On the 3rd of January, 1338, by which time the arrangements were tolerably complete, we find a special duty assigned to him. He was empowered to arrest and cause to be arrested in Hull and elsewhere as many ships as he thought needful for the carriage of corn, cloth, and other articles, which it was to be his business to purchase and provide for the king's use, and to convey them to Aquitaine, 'for the maintenance of the king's faithful people there;' in other words, he was to undertake the feeding and clothing of the army to be taken to France, and augmented there by Edward. It was doubtless in aid of this work that he was soon after

authorized to use certain houses in King Street, York; and, in reward for his doing of it, as well as in payment for some money which he had lent, that an important grant of land was made to him in the following November. Some time before this he had quitted England in pursuance of his commission. On the 4th of August he was appointed mayor of the staple at Antwerp, King Edward having gone thither a fortnight before; and in Antwerp and its neighbourhood he lived in state for at least a year and a half. During most of this time he was in the pay of the Crown. For the period between the 16th of August, 1338, and the 16th of November, 1339, with the exception of forty-seven days, during which he was absent on private business, he received a salary of 8s. a day from the Exchequer, while for the whole time were paid 4s. a day for one knight, and 2s. a day each for thirty-four men-at-arms in attendance upon him.

These eighteen months form the most memorable portion of his life. In February and March, 1339, we find him employed, with some other commissioners, in strange and delicate business. He had to treat with the Archbishop of Trèves for the repayment of 50,000 golden florins, which, with other moneys, had been lent to the king, and for which 'the hereditary and most beautiful crown of our lord the king and the realm of England,' had been pledged; which means, doubtless, that he had to pay the money himself. In a hundred other ways, as it seems, he was at this time serving his king, and Edward's appreciation of the service is shown in five notable documents, all issued from Antwerp, on the 15th of May, in this same year. In one, he and his brother Richard are released from all annual payment on account of the manor of Myton-upon-Hull, granted to them some years before, at a rental of 10l. 3s. a year; and in another, he and his other brother John, on account of their liberal dealing towards the state, are freed from all actions or demands of any sort that may be brought against them; whence it appears that his younger

brother, at any rate, was with him at this time. The third document is very curious indeed, giving us one of the very few glimpses that we can get of our merchant's private life, and serving to show him a man of rare and far-seeing kindness in his domestic relations. 'In consideration,' it is written, in the king's name, 'of the great and reasonable supply which our beloved merchant, William de la Pole, has often made to us, and especially after our late passage over the sea, and also of the praiseworthy attendance bestowed by him upon us, we, at the earnest request of the same William, grant and give license, for ourself and our heirs, to Katherine, wife of the same William, that she, after his death, may marry whomsoever she wishes, so long as he be one of the king's subjects, without let or hindrance.' It is not every day that we find a husband filled with such unselfish love for his wife that he makes earnest request that she may have facilities for contracting a second marriage, in case of his early death. It is less strange that William de la Pole should have made provision for the suitable settlement of his daughters. That the children, however, of a merchant, and, as the phrase goes, an altogether self-made man, should have a king, and as proud a king as Edward III., for their ward, is as strange as anything else. Yet so it was. In the fourth of the documents issued on this 15th of May, Edward grants to his friend's eldest daughter, Katherine, 'the first suitable marriage of some heir male, whose lands and tenements did not exceed the value of 500l.;' a very large sum in those days; to Blanche, the second, the next chance of like value; and to Margaret, the youngest, the one after that; with a proviso that, 'if either of them should come to marriageable age before such marriages fell to the Crown, and had been accepted for themselves,' 1000 marks should be paid in lieu to each of the unmarried ones.

The last of the five papers refers to William de la Pole himself, and shows why all the others were written. 'Considering in what manner his beloved merchant, William de la

Pole, was worn out in his service, and fatigued with labours and various troubles, and therefore willing to have regard to his welfare and repose,' the king released him from attendance at assizes, juries, and the like, as well as from service in the capacity of mayor, sheriff, or other agent of the Crown, against his will. It was also promised 'that this our present expedition being ended, in which we have perceived the service of the said William to have been exceedingly advantageous to us, he be not against his will sent anywhere, on this or the other side of the sea, for the prosecution of our business, or that of our heirs, and that he be not burthened with any office or labours to be undertaken for us; but that henceforth he may thoroughly enjoy the comforts of his home, as shall be agreeable to himself, without molestation or any manner of annoyance being offered to him in any way by us or our heirs or our officers.'

These favours were great, greater perhaps than any merchant earlier than William de la Pole had ever received; but they were certainly not more than he deserved. On the 30th of June, 1339, the king acknowledged his debt to him to the extent of 76,180*l.*, in addition, as it seems, to 46,389*l.* 19*s.* 10*d.*, supplied in instalments during this and the previous year. This was an immense sum, representing not much less than a million of money, according to its present value; but it was not more than was needed. King Edward, we read in the manuscript history of Hull already cited, 'was reduced to such a strait for want of timely supplies of money out of England, that he was forced to send for William de la Pole, who was then at Antwerp, managing and carrying on his merchandize and affairs, and to borrow many thousand pounds of gold of him; who did not only most freely supply him with all he had and could borrow and procure, but also mortgaged his own real estate to supply his further needs and necessities; which was a most noble, worthy, and glorious mark of his love, fidelity, and loyalty to his

prince, and of the greatness of his generous soul.' Edward was not ungrateful. On the 27th of September he issued a charter, unique in the history of commerce. Kings have often been sorely troubled for want of money; but in no other instance, surely, have they so honestly and graciously proclaimed to all the world the greatness of their need and the greatness of their debt to the men who helped them through it. 'Know,' it is written, 'that when our faithful and well-beloved subject, William de la Pole, presently after our coming to the parts on this side of the sea, hearing and understanding that our affairs, for which we took our journey, were for want of money very dangerously deferred, and being sensible of our wants, came in person unto us, and to us and our followers hath made and procured to be made, such a supply of money that by his means our honour and the honour of our followers—thanks be to God!—hath been preserved, which otherwise had been exposed to great danger. And afterwards the said William, continuing our supply with exceeding bounty, hath undertaken the payment of great sums for us to divers persons, for which he hath engaged himself by bonds and obligations, and if he had not done so, and intrusted his bounty and goodwill thus, not only unto us but also unto our confederates and subjects with us in Brabant, we could not by any means have been supplied, but must necessarily, with a great deal of reproach, have ruined our journey and designs. And by his means being assisted and supplied, we got to Hainault, near the marches of France, but could go no further, our moneys there again failing us. And when it was held for certain that our journey was altogether in vain, and our affairs utterly ruined, the said William, having still a care to relieve our extreme necessity, engaged himself and his whole estate, procured for us a great sum of money, and delivered us again out of exceeding great danger.'

We have said that Edward was not ungrateful for these services. In the same day he made the merchant

both a knight banneret—'nominally so, not really, because he could not do that, Sir William having never done any great thing or achievement in war to have the banner for the same flourishing over his head, which was the old essential way of making one'—and Chief Baron of the Exchequer; and, to show that these honours were not conferred, as was not uncommon with the needy sovereigns of the middle ages, as a means of extortion, he excused him from payment of even the ordinary patent fees. He gave him some houses in Lombard Street, London; he authorized him to receive all the issues of the realm and all subsidies granted to the Crown, and apply them in relief of his own claims until the whole were paid off; and in the following February he sent him home to England with all show of favour. But it was certainly not, according to the king's pledge, 'to enjoy the comforts of his home without molestation or any manner of annoyance.' In his new capacity of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, he was expected, along with his fellow-officers, to furnish as much more money as was needed for the conduct of the war in France. He had mortgaged all his own property in Edward's behalf, but he could not mortgage the strength and honour of England. To the king's repeated requests for money, 'these false traitors,' as the courtier-historian terms Sir William de la Pole and his associates, 'sent him letters to the effect that the collection of the tenths of England, which had been granted to him, could not be made, nor could the number of the sacks of wool throughout all the realm be raised; and that they did not dare to act more rigorously through fear of war, and lest the people might choose rather to rise against them than give them any more; also, that the collection of such moneys as they had received did not suffice for the wages or for the fees of the servants and officers of the king, nor yet to clear off the debts which he himself owed for the expenses of his household, to the payment of which they had been assigned by command of the king

himself.' Thereat King Edward was not a little angry. In November he came over to England, and, seizing the offenders, summarily put them under arrest. Sir William de la Pole was sent to the castle of Devizes, and the others to different similar places of confinement. How they were treated, or how long they were detained, is not recorded; but the circumstance at best affords a curious illustration of the lawlessness and injustice which the most chivalrous of kings could show with impunity towards the most honest and honourable of his subjects.

For many years there was a marked coldness and harshness in Edward's treatment of De la Pole. Many of the favours conferred upon him were withdrawn, and repayment of the money lent to him in his time of sorest need was tardily and grudgingly made. At last, however, the king came to a better mind. In 1346 we find him restoring to his 'faithful merchant' certain manors of his that had been appropriated to the royal use, and making restitution for the wrongful tenure; and under the year 1354 we meet with a singular document, to the effect that 'Sir William de la Pole, having, in the fullest possible manner, remitted and quitted claim to the king for all the debts on account of moneys lent to him,' was, in return, pardoned for all actions and demands of the Crown registered against him, as well as 'for all felonies, homicides, robberies, and the like, which he or his attorneys might have committed, contrary to the peace of the realm.' Moreover, 'because the aforesaid William was said to be impotent and of great age, and not able personally to labour in prosecuting and defending pleas,' he was allowed to appear, whenever it was necessary for him to present himself, by attorney.

At this time he was about seventy years old, and certainly he had done enough to make him wish for repose. For some years past he seems to have been living quietly, though not idly, in Hull. 'Being put into so great a capacity of doing good,' says the local historian, 'he did mightily encourage and improve

this town, by many new charters, privileges, immunities, and freedoms, that he got and obtained for it. And having lived in these great honours about twelve or fifteen years, feared and beloved of every one, and having with comfort and joy seen his two sons arising, and almost even risen, to the greatest honours in England, he then determined, out of thanks and gratitude to God for His so many and great favours bestowed upon him, to found, build, and endow a most stately monastery; but before that he had half finished the same, he died.' His original purpose, as we learn from his son's statement, had been to found a hospital, and with this intent he obtained a charter from Edward III.; then he resolved to make it a house for minoress nuns of the order of St. Clare; but this determination in turn gave place to another, which issued in the erection of the Carthusian Priory, still in part existing as the Charterhouse. The work, amply provided for in his will, was continued by his son and heir; while outside of it was also put up the building known as the *Maison Dieu*, for the housing and maintenance of thirteen poor old men and thirteen poor old women.

He died at Hull on the 22nd of June, 1366. His widow lived on until the 28th of January, 1382, without making use of her license to marry again. Both were buried in Trinity Church, Hull, where a monument, adorned with their effigies, still exists. 'He is bare-headed, reclining his head on two cushions, habited as a merchant, in an outer cloak or mantle, buttoned close at the neck, with a standing cape, and buttons down to the sides. His coat has six buttons on the breast, and the sleeves are buttoned and reach to his wrists. At his breast hangs a dagger or whittle. At his feet is a lion. She seems to wear the mitred head-dress, falling down in plaits at the side of her face; her close gown buttoned on

the waist, and also the sleeves, which reach to the wrists. Under this is a petticoat, and over it falls a kind of veil. In her hands she holds a heart. Her head rests on two cushions, supported by angels. At her feet is a dog.'

We have thus told all that is most interesting in the stray records that have come down to us bearing on the life of Sir William de la Pole, the first of our great merchant princes. More famous, but less noteworthy, were some of his descendants. His eldest son, Michael, contemporary with Chaucer, began life as a courtier, and became an especial favourite with Richard II., who made him Chancellor of England in 1383, and Earl of Suffolk in 1384. Justly impeached before the Commons, however, for his evil deeds, he was in 1385 deprived of office, rank, and property, and forced to flee for safety into France, where he died in 1391. To his son Michael, a year or two before the deposition of Richard, were restored the peerage and the possessions of his father, and he held his honours with dignity until his death in 1415. His son, also named Michael, Earl of Suffolk for a month, was slain at Agincourt, in the same year, to be succeeded by a younger son, William, who, from being fourth Earl, became the first Duke of Suffolk, who conducted the siege of Orleans against Joan of Arc, and became the favourite of Margaret of Anjou, Lord Chancellor, Lord High Admiral, and virtually king of England, to be hunted down as a traitor and beheaded in 1450. John, his son, was reinstated by Edward IV., who gave him his sister in marriage, and died peacefully in 1491. His son and successor, Edmund, however, was beheaded by Henry VII. in 1513, for treasonable coveting of the crown of England; and Anne, his only child, with whom ended the direct line of succession from Sir William de la Pole, merchant of Hull, became a nun.

H. R. F. B.



Engraved by W. J. Linton, from a Photograph of Edgar's Frames.

THE RAILWAY: AN ALLEGORY.

See "Art in a Railway Station."



ART IN A RAILWAY STATION.

SOME years ago Mr. G. F. Watts, the painter of the great fresco of the School of Legislators in the Hall of Lincoln's Inn, offered the directors of the North-Western Railway to paint with frescoes the large hall (then approaching completion) of the terminus at Euston Square, if the directors would defray the cost of the scaffolding and colours. Mr. Watts is an artist of acknowledged ability, admired and esteemed by his fellow-painters, as well as by the public—though not a royal academician. His time is precious to him; but in his love of his art, and his desire to do what he might to assist in working out what he believes to be its high purpose, he was ready to give up without remuneration the years it might be necessary to devote to the undertaking. The reader knows well the Euston Terminus: it is needless to say, therefore, that Mr. Watts's offer was not accepted. He was thanked, of course; but it was whispered to him that 'in the state of railway property the directors did not consider themselves justified in going even to the expense which would be required merely for the scaffolding and the colours.' And 'the architect,' as Mr. Watts said in relating the circumstance to the Royal Academy Commission—'the architect expressed great alarm about it; though why he should be alarmed one does not readily see.

Perhaps the directors were in the right; apart even from the consideration of the state of railway property—a consideration to which, when so minded, they give very little heed, but which furnishes a ready answer to an inconvenient projector. Perhaps they were in the right even on æsthetic considerations. At any rate, they have the support of a great authority in matters of art. Mr. Ruskin denounces with all his might—and he is mighty in denunciation—every kind of artistic decoration at a railway station. You don't go to a railway station, he says, to stay

there and admire either the building or its ornaments. What you want is to get away from it as soon as you can. And that, as you see the moment the proposition is stated, is a mental condition not at all compatible with the patient, loving study of a work of art.

They think of these things differently, however, in France—and in Germany. In France they have gone some way in rendering railway stations ornamental. In Germany they have actually done what Mr. Watts proposed, and the bare suggestion of which made the North-Western directors shudder, and alarmed their architect.

We are about to introduce the reader to the first of two somewhat remarkable examples of German art which have been lately painted in the great hall of the Munich Railway Station. They are executed in water-glass, and are of large size. But, after a frequent German fashion, they are placed at a great height, and are badly lighted. The colouring, moreover, is said not to be satisfactory—of what German fresco is the colour satisfactory?—and the hall is *not* the waiting-room: so that altogether the impression they produce on railway passengers appears not to be very powerful. One may fairly doubt whether, if ever so well seen, their purpose would be very clearly understood in the passing glance they are likely to receive from the passenger hurrying to or from his train, unless, indeed, that passenger were a philosophic German.

To every nation its own forms of art, as well as literature. The Englishman must have realities: the German prefers abstractions. The English painter tries to imitate as clearly as he can something he has seen in the outer world. The German painter—at least, of 'high art'—seeks to represent the Idea which, like the metaphysician, he has evolved from his inner consciousness: or, rather, so it has been. The fathers of that lofty form of German art, which the German

critics fancied was to revolutionize the art of Europe, Schadow and Schnorr, Overbeck and Cornelius, and their associates and disciples, were all filled with a Schlegelian notion of the grandeur of the abstract and ascetic in art, the beauty of symbolism, the evil of dependence on the external world, and the necessity for imbuing the mind with that inner spirituality which distinguished the early Italian and German masters, and making these masters in all things their guide and model. It was hailed as a revelation in aesthetics. The young painters all adopted the new creed. German art became, to speak technically, representative rather than imitative. The direct study of nature was forsworn: the Idea was all in all. But that phase of art has pretty well passed away. The founders of the school have lived to witness its decline. You see by such pretty, smooth, tinted inanities as Mücke contributed to the International Exhibition, that the saintly ascetic school still has its devotees, and is patronized in high places; but it is no longer anywhere looked up to as the typical form of German art. Young Germany least of all recognizes in it the Art of the Future.

Young Germany is disposed to look for that in a more sensational style; but hardly trusts to itself in the matter. It turns now to France, now to Belgium, and is evidently expecting that between the two it shall at least learn how to move with a little more sprightliness, and then it hopes to move to good purpose. At present it is in a transition state.

But there is a modification of the former style which evidently has a strong hold on the German mind, and if not the Art of the (German) Future, is perhaps the typical art of the Present. Of this Kaulbach is at once the founder and the living representative. Kaulbach was the scholar of Cornelius. He is not so learned, perhaps not so great, a painter as his master; but he has stronger muscles, greater vigour, more self-reliance, consequently more originality, and a spirit of

satire which he employs somewhat freely in his pictures, and which makes him feared as well as admired. Kaulbach has been employed to execute many large mural pictures; but, like his predecessors, he usually contents himself with making the designs, and preparing the cartoons, leaving the actual painting on the walls to his pupils and assistants. By this means a school of skilful painters is formed, ready to undertake any commission, however vast. For the most part they are mere imitators, clever copyists of the master's manner, nothing more. Now and then, however, one emerges from the crowd, and makes good his claim to be something better than his master's assistant.

Such an one is the painter whose work is before us. Herr Echter, the painter of the railway frescoes, is the pupil of Kaulbach, and has painted on several of his huge frescoes; but he has here shown that he can think for himself, and work after a manner of his own.

With what kind of subjects Mr. Watts would have covered the walls of the great hall of the Euston Terminus he has not stated. We may be sure it would not have been with such as Herr Echter has painted in the great hall of the Munich Terminus. He would hardly have symbolized the progress of civilization by allegories of the railway and the electric telegraph. Yet that is what Herr Echter has done, and done well. He has so far conformed to the German idea as to paint an allegory; but it is an allegory so clear and simple in its character that the most matter-of-fact Englishman will easily comprehend it—at least if supplied with a clue. He has not, as will be seen, taken the well-worn symbols, but has worked out a new and poetic conception.

The subject in the cut before us is the Railway. The Power of Steam is typified by a man of Titanic strength and energy, bound, however, in fetters of iron, and controlled and guided with the lightest touch by the calm majestic female whom he carries swiftly forward,

and whose bondsman he has become. With his broad wings he cleaves the air with the rapidity of an eagle. From his mouth he puffs forth steam and fire. His mighty limbs proclaim his power, and their abrupt, energetic, angular motion is strangely suggestive of the action of the driving-rods of a locomotive. As he rushes irresistibly onward the barriers and frontier boundaries which separate neighbouring peoples are split asunder; travellers' passports, gate tickets, the permissions to remove of the burgher, the wanderbush of the journeyman are scattered to the winds. The black eagle, the eagle with the double head, Bavaria's royal manual, are alike tumbled in the dust. Despite king and kaiser, as the railroad makes its way every one shall be free to trade as he likes, and to go whither he will. The overturned Philistine, the bewigged and spectated pedant with the long queue, who lies prone on his back gazing at the fiery portent in helpless bewilderment, is the embodiment of the old bureaucratic formulas, the spirit of obstruction, restriction and red tape, his papers torn, his ink all spilled, his career ended. The sluggish old-worldism is pointed at by the obese snail in the left-hand corner, who is getting out of the way as fast as his nature will allow him.

Civilization is personified in the noble female figure holding as a sceptre the caduceus, teeming emblem of peace and commerce, who is borne along by the Genius of Steam. Commerce, Peace, Civilization, the allegory seems to proclaim,

are carried on the wings of the railway, whilst every barrier which keeps neighbouring populations apart is or shall be burst asunder by its progress. And the winged genii who float before and behind the glorious woman—the one wielding vigorously an axe, the other, a sunny smiling child, carrying carelessly a cornucopia, from which fruit and flowers and golden coins are falling—show that if destruction precede, a bounteous and equable distribution of the fruits of the earth follows the course of the iron car.

We have briefly told what seems to us the purport of the design. We cannot now stay to examine its merits. That the design is very far from commonplace, the reader will probably agree with us. That it promises more than the railway has hitherto accomplished is perhaps a fault in the allegory. But the painter, like the poet, is in his higher moods a prophet. Here he points sternly at what has long been a heavy clog on German industry and civilization, and it says something for his courage that he should have ventured thus to hold up to public scorn what the ruling powers in Bavaria cherish as almost sacred institutions.

In our next number we hope to give the companion composition, which is more purely poetic in character. This will afford an opportunity to add a few additional remarks. Meanwhile we may mention that our engravings have been carefully reduced from photographs made from the original cartoons, which are much superior to the frescoes—at least for our purpose.



THE DUET.

THE light wind lifts the curtain white
 With gentle motion from the wall,
 And on the carpeting within
 The scattered rose-leaves showering fall.

Two sweet young faces smiling show,
 As half aside the muslin blows;
 One fair as snowy jessamine,
 The other bright as June's red rose.

And on our troublous 'working-world'
 Those sunny faces seem to me
 With double radiance to shine,
 Like stars upon a stormy sea.

A charming pair for artist-eye!
 Nor charming pair alone in name;
 The jewels the rich casket grace,
 The pictures doubly gild the frame.

The old piano open, sounds,
 The two pure voices swelling rise,
 'Seconda,' standing, archly smiles,
 'La Prima' answers with her eyes.

Their burst of joyous melody
 United, through the chamber rolls.
 Oh, tell not *them* that there are those
 Who have not music in their souls!

Ah! dream, sweet girls, that world-old dream!
 'Love shall be lord of all,' as yet:
 In thy blue eyes he shines, fair Blonde,
 In thine arch glance he laughs, Brunette.

There is for each one secret-spring,
 There is for each one dear-loved name;
 Two stories differently told,
 But 'finis,' maidens fair—the same!

A time shall come when ye who sing,
 With joyous notes and laughing eyes,
 The song of earth's true happiness,
 Shall sing to other sympathies;

When deeper voices than your own
 Shall sound for each the name of 'Wife,'
 And their loved master-hands shall strike
 The sweetest, purest chords of life.

A. H. B.

LITTLE GOLDEN-HAIR'S STORY.

'TELL me a story, or sing me a song,'
 Said the curly-haired child on my knee;
 'It must not be short, and it must not be long.'
 Little Golden-hair, what shall it be?



Illustrated by H. M. Brown

LITTLE GOLDEN-LOCKS STORY.

By Mrs. M. B. Brown.



Drawn by R. Barnes.

LITTLE GOLDEN-HAIR'S STORY.

See the Poem.

Tell me a story, my dear, of a wind,
Of a breeze, who blows by the sea,
And what the waves sing to him all the day long,
And what to the waves answers the wind.

The waves, in calm weather, come tripping, tripping,
Tripping, up from the sea,
The flowers at the bottom are blooming and laughing,
The shells on the beach, if he wishes to laugh,
As they listen to the sea.

But the wind is of gold, and the sea is of green,
And the waves take the light, like the look of a queen,
That drops from the back of the moon.

Then up, pretty princess, the white sails are flying,
At the call of the wind, they are singing and flying,
That have a long sail to the sea.

And the waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
Half-dressed and half-dressed to the sea,
And the waves are in love, just as if they had said,
"I am my love, for me."

But the waves, in rough weather, come tripping, tripping,
Tripping, up from the sea,
And the waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
To be dressed on the wind's dress.

Leaving father and mother, and sister and brother,
For a stranger from never-distant sea,
And fond winds are, as the windings are,
The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear.

The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
Would I could be the wind's dress,
O my, only say, you will take me away,
To with-holding waves of the sea.

Oh, what a sad story, little Golden Book,
That told the story, I say,
The wind is in love, with a smile and a tear,
And then with his love he says.

Yes, now, little Golden Book, how can I tell,
That story, for a princess's tale,
The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
I can think of it all for myself.

All, whatever, sweet Golden Book, close to my ear,
As I say, I want to know,
The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
And the waves are in love, with a smile and a tear.

The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear,
And there, on the beach, like a little bright spot,
The pretty princess I can see.

The princess is here, over her all the day long,
On paper his sweet tale of his life,
And when the waves are, and the wind is too strong,
The waves are in love, with a smile and a tear.

But in the wind's story, or in the wind's tale,
Little Golden Book, say to me,
When the waves are, and the wind is too strong,
As she was when she said to the sea.

- ' Tell me a story, or sing me a song
Of a princess, who dwelt by the sea,
And what the waves sung to her, all the day long,
And what to the waves answered she.'
- The waves, in calm weather, came trippingly, trippingly,
Ripplingly, up from the sea,—
- ' The flowers at thy casement are blooming and dying,
The smile on thy mouth, it has ended in sighing,
As thou sittest alone by the sea;
But the mast is of gold, and the ship is of pearl,
And its sails take the light, like this long amber curl
That droops from thy neck to thy knee.'
- Cheer up, pretty princess! the white sails are flying,
At the ends of the world, they are shining and flying,
That bear a fond suitor to thee!
- And she listens in fear, 'twixt a smile and a tear,
Half-pleased and half-pensive is she,
And she tosses her head, just as if she had said,
' He may tarry for ever, for me!'
- But the waves, in rough weather, came roaringly, roaringly,
Pouringly, up from the sea,
And the land-echoes moan, ' Wilt thou go all alone,
To be tossed on the storm-driven sea?
Leaving father, and mother, and sister, and brother,
For a stranger thou never didst see?'
- And loud winds arise, as she weepingly cries,
' He may come,—but he'll never have me!
The waters are cold—not for silver and gold
Would I trust to the treacherous sea,—
O say, only say, you won't take me away,
Ye wild-flowing waves of the sea!'
- ' Ah, what a sad song!' little Golden-hair said;
' But finish the story, I pray;
The prince he is coming quite soon, I'm afraid,
And then will he take her away?'
- ' Nay, now, little Golden-hair, how can I tell?
Run away, for a troublesome elf!
But she clapped her small hands, crying out, ' Very well,
I can finish it all for myself!'
- Ah, whisper, sweet Golden-hair, close to my ear,
Do tell me—I want so to know!
- ' The prince he is handsome—the prince he is dear,
And the princess will willingly go.
- ' The ship is all sparkling with gold and with pearl,
The white sails are fluttering free,
And there, on the deck, like a little bright speck,
The pretty princess I can see.
- ' The prince he leans over her all the day long,
Or plays his sweet lute at her side;
And when the waves roar, and the wind is too strong,
He soothes her with lovely pride.'
- ' But is she unhappy? or is she afraid?'
Little Golden-hair capered for glee;
' She's as merry again,' said this mischievous maid,
' As she was when she sat by the sea!'

THE ORDEAL FOR WIVES.

A Story of London Life.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE MORALS OF MAYFAIR.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISORDER CALLED LOVE.

MISS ENGLEHEART'S sweeping condemnation of men's hearts, brains, and principles was not entirely correct as regarded Oliver Carew. He was as little conceited as any handsome lad could be upon whom the prettiest faces of more than one London season had smiled not unfavourably. In matters pertaining to his own gratification he was hot-headed and impulsive as a schoolboy. He would not have stepped a line out of the path which he had been taught to consider honour had the crossing of that line been the one and only means that should rescue him from death.

But in saying that he was doubtless thinking vastly more of his own amusement than of falling seriously in love or marrying Miss Joan had approached very nearly to the truth. When Mr. Carew had thought of marriage at all, up to this period, it had been as of a necessary condition of existence that would doubtless come upon him some day, leaving his own happy selfish life very much as it was, but adding the companionship of a good-tempered, pretty, affectionate sort of young woman, whose tact and devotion to him should prevent his ever feeling bored when at home, but yet never stand the least in the way if he wanted to amuse himself elsewhere. The domestic lot of such of his more intimate friends as had married did not invariably serve as an illustration of these optimist opinions; but he was a great deal too easy a philosopher to trouble himself with any deeper views of life than those which his own favourably-placed circumstances suggested. If he did eventually get a wife like So-and-so's, who should bully him, or a

wife like So-and-so's dearest friend's, who should insist upon going to balls without him every night of the week, why it would be a nuisance, and he must make the best of it—no difficult matter when one has all the pleasantest ingredients for material enjoyment so very ready to one's hand. In the mean time, he was duly thankful for having escaped the strong ankles and sandy hair of that wealthy young woman his relations had desired him to win, and had every intention of continuing in his present unfettered condition as long as possible.

But what are intentions when a well-favoured face looks up to yours in the loneliness of green-shaded woods? What are intentions when this face smiles at you, flushed and animated, amidst the golden glory of the moors at sunset? What are intentions, what are fixed and steadfast resolves, when this face turns from you blushing, as you whisper soft adieux at twilight amidst the perfumed, voluptuous silence of the summer lanes? In a fortnight from the time that Oliver first met Miss Fleming he believed her to be the loveliest and (which charmed him more) the most loving woman in the world; the only one he had ever admired; the only one who could by any possibility make him happy. He believed that he could not live very long if he were to be separated from her, or at least that life under such circumstances would be much too shattered and objectless to be worth holding. He did not care about her position or her lack of money, of these he had enough for them both: he wanted her. No man who married Esther Fleming could be said to marry beneath him—

self. He knew that he should be higher and better in every way from the very hour in which she promised to become his wife.

And to a certain degree he was right. Esther was not a woman to inspire any other than a worthy and an honest passion. Mr. Carew's mental condition was not visibly improved by his love; indeed, he became, if anything, more awkward and less agreeable in her society than he had been at first, but he was none the less bettered in his spirit—less selfish, less worldly, less self-seeking than he had ever been before since he was born (less so than he will ever be again while he lives). And on the evening when he finally determined to tell her his love he felt and knew that a richer stake was about to be won or lost by him than any upon which, during his two-and-twenty years of life, his hopes had ever before been staked.

This state of feeling had not, of course, all arisen out of that one meeting in the woods, or that one twilight parting on the moorside. Mr. Carew had, through a succession of happy accidents, met Esther every day during the fortnight of his stay at Lynmouth: had met her by the seaside, in the valleys, on the moors; once, by special invitation of Miss Joan, had spent a long evening with her in her own garden at Countisbury. Acquaintance is never slow of ripening between persons whose united ages scarce make forty years. A fortnight is quite enough to bring the deepest passion of a very young man to maturity. On this evening, when his confession was just trembling upon Oliver's lips, it seemed to him as though his love had already existed for years, as though no further knowledge of life or of Esther could be needed than that which these dozen of country walks, of lingering twilight partings, had accorded him.

It was a glorious summer night; the last night in June. From the heathy uplands around Countisbury they had watched the sun set until all its gold was merged in pale and fading azure above the sea; then, when the shadows deepened round the twilight moors, and the purple

of the night began to fall, they turned away through one of the shaded field-paths towards the woods, and Mr. Carew's voice began to falter as he talked.

Now Esther Fleming, in spite of all the self-communings recorded at the end of the last chapter, was not in love with Mr. Carew one whit. She was flattered exceedingly by his evident regard for her; she thought frequently, 'If this is love, love is a very pleasant thing, and so is life.' She liked to put on her best muslin frock and a flower in her waist-belt, when she walked out to meet him on the hills; she liked to hear his voice sink as he spoke to her; she liked to feel, for the first time in her life, that inordinately strong sensation common to all women's hearts, namely, pleasure in possessing a young, and brave, and handsome man for her trembling slave. But she did not love him. No shade of real passion had crossed her heart; no deeper emotion than that of flattered vanity had made her cheek flush and her eyes sink beneath his. A girl very honestly, I was going to say icily, brought up, as she had been, does not, you know, warm into sudden emotion as quickly as do indwellers of towns or readers of romance, or frequenters of crowded assemblies (young women, in a word, whose stimulated imagination has acted out the drama of love a great number of times before the actual uprising of the curtain), although passion in such a nature as Esther's is, when once aroused, strong and obstinate in proportion to the very slowness of its growth. And so, not being at all in love, but only fancying she was, and knowing, instinctively, that Oliver's declaration was coming, Esther felt intensely happy and proud at the thought of accepting him, and knew none of the agony, the fear, the torturing doubts, the ague fits of suspense, which experience should one day tell her are the sure heralds of any scene of mature and earnest passion.

It was, as I said, a glorious summer night. In dark and wintry days to come, and when all the love-delusion had become hollowness and

vanity in her sight, how clearly Esther could recall every outward sound and sensation of that next half-hour! the faint swirl of the scythe from distant hayfields in the valley; the sonorous drone of wild bees on the wing; the hushed cry of the cuckoo from the woods; the elastic warmth of the thyme-laden air. One by one she could remember all the mass of summer foliage over which at the time her eyes unconsciously passed, as, with beating heart and flushing cheeks, she turned away from Oliver's pleading face, the pink and scarlet wreaths of honeysuckle bending low around the foam-like balls of elder, and tall red fox-gloves in the hedges, or meeting in close embrace with the delicate tendrils of the wax-like briony across the path; the dim and mellow light cast by the transparent leafage overhead—yes, the single briar-rose that stood out so clear in its half-blown crimson against the sky just at the moment when Oliver's voice no longer faltered, and she was forced to meet his pleading face and answer, she remembered all.

'You will not quite forget me, Miss Fleming? You will think, once or twice during the next year, of the hours we have spent together?'

'Yes, I shall think of them, Mr. Carew.'

'For a whole year?'

'Anything I could remember for a year I could remember for my life.'

'Anything? Your meeting with that old parson in the valley of Rocks last summer, or with me, or any other utterly unimportant circumstance. I understand; your memory is good; simply that.'

Mr. Carew's tone grew ironical. He wondered whether he was making a fool of himself; he reflected bitterly upon the levity and falseness of all women's natures.

'I should remember things I did not care for, but I should not think about them,' began Esther; then she stopped short.

'And you will think of our walks, and, sometimes, of me?' cried Oliver, eagerly, and flushing with hope

again as he caught sight of her face. 'Oh, Esther—Miss Fleming, I mean—will you say that again?'

'I did not know I had said it;' but her cheeks were covered with blushes, her lips could scarce bring out the equivocation, the last instinctive effort at denial.

'Will you say it now?'

'Mr. Carew!'

'Miss Fleming, will you say it, and make me the happiest man in all England? Will you tell me that you won't forget me?—that I may think of you and write to you sometimes, when I am away? Oh, Esther!' cried the lad, passionately, 'will you let me love you? You can't prevent that, for I love you from my soul already. Will you let me hope that some day you will care a little for me?'

A subject could not have wooed a queen more humbly. He never tried to take her hand; he hardly dared to look into her face. He could have proposed to marry any London young lady at a ball, in the full presence of tall brothers and Argus-eyed duennas, with less diffidence than he felt towards this simple girl of eighteen amidst the lonely silence of the country lanes. 'Esther, will you give me no answer?'

'Oliver!'

All he sought, all he wanted (just then) upon earth was in that one word. 'Esther, you will let me hope?'

He looked into her eyes—her frank and girlish eyes—and thought he read there the very fruition of hope; thought that in their unabashed bright happiness there was the confession of real love.

'Esther, you will be my wife?'

'Some day, sir, perhaps. I am very young now.'

'Never say "sir," any more. I am only Oliver to you now.'

'Yes, Oliver.'

How the word thrilled through the lad's heart again, coming from her lips. 'You promise me. I am exacting, Esther; I must have more than a mere indifferent "yes" on such a subject. You promise me that you will be my wife?'

'As you wish, sir.'

Long afterwards, Esther Fleming

strove to assuage reproachful conscience with the thought that she did not give the verbal promise he required from her. I am afraid that when eyes and cheeks do not say nay 'tis but a spirit of Jesuitic casuistry that can seek refuge in the fact that the lips have not promised. What are mere bare words at such a time? Oliver, poor boy, never knew whether she said 'I promise,' or 'I do not,' he knew simply that she had accepted him, and so thinking, trod upon air for the remainder of the night. He was really intensely happy, as much in love as it was possible for him to be; too newly intoxicated to reflect upon the exceeding folly of the entanglement, too enamoured of himself to doubt for one instant the reality of Esther's love. With the passion of men and women there mixes some degree of bitterness, some recollection, some dread, from the first moment that the enchanted cup is raised to the lips. With boy-and-girl sentiment there is no bitterness at all; and, however mawkish older persons may consider the draught, they in their simplicity do, no doubt, regard it as nectar fresh from the hands of the gods. Only one thing, reader, don't let us older persons attempt to chronicle their first raptures. Some singularly rare love scenes may come within the limits of fiction that aspires to be sensible; but the earliest stage of a very immature engagement is not of these. Oliver and Miss Fleming lingered among the silent lanes till ten that night. They thought of the stars, they thought vaguely of their own delicious future. They were silent frequently for long spaces at a time; their conversation when they spoke consisted of monosyllables, at once disconnected and inane. Could the prince of realistic writers—could M. de Balzac himself—make much out of such innocuous raw materials? I think not very much. Love, to be amenable to art, must be misplaced, or darkened by impediments, or coming very near indeed to the end of the third volume; and as Oliver's and Esther's love is at present in no one of these conditions, we will leave the lovers, if

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you please, to their own ambrosial but infantine raptures, and turn to the remarkably prosaic people who awaited Esther's return beside the frugal supper table of the Countisbury farm.

'Esther is out late,' said Joan, ostensibly shouting in her mother's ear, but with her keen eyes fixed on David's face. 'We had better eat our supper, and not wait, mother. Mr. Carew will have met her again; and when young people like him and Esther meet, old ones like us are not likely to be remembered.'

'He is a well-looking lad,' remarked old Mrs. Engleheart, dreamily. 'I have seen him here sometimes, haven't I, Joan?'

'You saw him for one entire evening, a week ago, mother; don't you remember, we had tea under the thorn, and afterwards'—her eyes at this juncture pierced David clean through and through—'afterwards Mr. Carew and Esther walked for an hour or more up and down the terrace in the moonlight. Don't you remember I said to you 'twas a wonder they could find so much to say after such a short acquaintance?'

'Esther is a clever girl,' said Mrs. Engleheart, turning round to David to confirm her opinion; 'and perhaps this Mr.—Mr.—what is his name, Joan?—is serious in his attentions. Don't you think so, nephew?'

It was very possible David thought so; but he did not look up from his book.

'Unless I thought it a great deal more than possible, I should not countenance all these daily walks together,' broke out Joan, promptly. 'Mr. Carew, if he is a young man of common honour, must declare his intentions after all that has occurred.'

'All that has occurred!' repeated David, with a groan of the spirit that Joan's sharp senses divined rather than heard. 'What, in heaven's name, do you mean by that, Joan?'

'I mean,' said Miss Engleheart, very drily, and confronting David full, and looking, as he felt, poor creature, right into every weak part—every smallest cranny or inter-

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stice of his heart,—‘I mean that for a fortnight this young stranger has met Esther daily, and has walked with her for hours; and that the girl keeps the flowers he gives her in her room, and makes foolish excuses when I find them there, and cannot even mention Carew’s name without blushing. You don’t know anything about such matters, cousin,’ she pursued, pitilessly; ‘but when I was young I remember all this was called being in love; and if our Esther cares seriously for the young man Carew, I suppose it is desirable that his intentions towards her should be openly declared.’

Miss Joan was for sharp decisive treatment in all disorders, mental and bodily. She knew the extent of the malady under which poor David was suffering to the full as well as he did himself, and was for extirpating it, as one would a thorn out of the fleshly man, by sudden violence. The searing of a nerve with red-hot iron wire was a remedy Joan had successfully tried upon herself in toothache: could not a foolish passion be treated in like manner? a moment of sharp intolerable anguish, and then the pain gone for ever. I think there was some wisdom in her opinion—at least as regarded David. When the cutting, cruel truth fell on him thus suddenly from his cousin’s lips he felt, as he had not felt during this entire fortnight, that he must rouse himself, not only to endure, but to conquer. All these dull suffering days of mechanical reading, these sleepless nights, these agonies of mute jealousy, must have an end. He would have to act, to give Esther to her lover, to listen to family discussions on her prospects, to see her married. Loving her as he did, should he not make the poor exertion of striving, at least, not to cloud her happiness? He had been gentle as ever with her since he knew the utter hopelessness of his own passion; but he had been moody and silent in his manner when she tried to rouse him—unsympathizing in the poor child’s natural hearty spirits. This should be over now; he would rally his forces and conquer. The feeling which had been

in secret the light of his life so long was at an end. He must return to the prosaic middle age out of which Esther’s fond young face had for a few years cheated him: must go back from life to vegetation; must make such interest for his days as Joan did; must have Joan instead of Esther for a companion; succumb to Joan; marry Joan, very likely—it mattered little now whether he did or not. Well, let him swallow all this horrible bitterness like a man—not make his foolish passion any more ridiculous than it was already by moping and pining like a love-sick lad.

Joan noted the effect of her gentle tonic in a certain determination with which David flung aside his book and seized hold of his knife and fork; and during the whole of the meal continued to administer generous doses of the same wholesome draught to her unhappy victim.

‘It wouldn’t be ill in you, David, to ask Carew to dinner. I have not seen any one at my mother’s table for fifteen years; but I think for Esther’s sake this young man should be invited.’

‘Yes, Joan.’

‘If his attentions end as I intend them to do, it will be one of the most fortunate things that ever happened in our family. I have had a letter this evening from Aunt Tudor, and my own opinion is that she is breaking up. Her feet are swelling, David.’

‘Are they indeed, Joan?’

‘Mother,’ emphatically, to the poor patient old lady at her side, ‘did I tell you that Aunt Tudor’s feet are swelling?’

‘Dear, dear!’ cried Mrs. Engleheart, in her deprecating way, ‘now I call that very odd indeed of Thalia. She is two years younger than me, and when we were girls—’

‘I know what it means, David,’ proceeded Joan, who seldom troubled herself to hear anybody out. ‘I remember Uncle Garratt and a dozen other people going off in the same way. She writes more than ever of her parties and her gaiety, and her excellent health and spirits, but she doesn’t deceive me. She’s breaking up fast.’

'I thought I heard you tell your mother she was going to Weymouth, and wanted Esther to stay with her on her return.'

'Oh, you were listening after all, then, cousin, when you never lifted your eyes up from your book. Yes, Mrs. Tudor is going to Weymouth, and has asked Esther to stay with her; and that confirms my belief. She wouldn't go to the seaside in the dog-days, unless she felt she was ill. Now, just look what the child's position will be at her death.'

'We have sometimes thought it would be better than it is now,' suggested David.

'I have never thought so,' answered Miss Engleheart. 'I have never built upon my Aunt Tudor's goodness of heart, or her sense of duty either. She helps to keep the child now because it would be a disgrace not to do so; but she wouldn't spare a farthing from her superfluities to save all belonging to her from starvation, if the starvation was to come when she could be no longer shamed by it.'

'You are severe, Joan.'

'I am just, David. Mrs. Tudor, while she lives, is not likely to be a hard or a miserly woman. She has too much of her brother Garratt in her nature not to wish to be liked. She is too thoroughly worldly not to spend money where the decencies of the world require it to be spent. But dead—that is quite another thing. Uncle Garratt was generous and affectionate to his son at the very time when he was squandering the last shilling of the lad's inheritance. Mrs. Tudor will be the same as ever to Esther till she dies—then—'

'Then her money will not be buried with her, I presume, Joan?' David hazarded.

'Her money will be left to some one who doesn't want it, or—which is much more likely—will be found to die with her. I took it into my head years ago that Aunt Tudor had sunk her money; and when I take up a fixed opinion, Cousin David, I generally find myself right. Then see what Esther's position will be. We could not support her upon our income, David.'

'We would try, Joan.'

'We should do nothing of the kind; nor is Esther one who would live in poverty without trying to help herself. Besides, our money, such as it is, dies out with my mother's life and my own; and what provision could be made for her even if we could manage to support her—which is doubtful? No; Esther, unless she marries, must work. When Aunt Tudor volunteered this fifty pounds' worth of accomplishments, I believe it was with the notion that a wretched smattering of accomplishments will be able some day or other to get the child a living as a governess.'

'A governess,' repeated old Mrs. Engleheart, who seldom caught up more than the last words of Joan's harangues. 'What is that you are saying? I hope you don't still keep to that dreadful idea of Esther's being a governess. Oh! if my poor dear brother, with his refined delicacy, had thought that a granddaughter of his would be brought to work for her own bread!' And the old lady glanced towards the picture of Garratt Fleming, which, with its imposing Hussar dress and medals, and handsome tranquil face, really looked awfully well-bred and condescending upon the bare oak panels of that humble room.

'Oh, if Garratt Fleming had had common honour, and had not wasted his sisters' portion and squandered the inheritance of his own descendants!' said Miss Joan, who was never bitterer than upon the subject of deceased relations. 'When I see what these sentiments of refined delicacy end in, I thank God for being as I am—honest at least. I should be glad to see Esther earning her own living to-morrow, if there was need; and I am proud to say the girl herself inherits none of the aristocratic feelings of honour of our family.'

'Family,' repeated Mrs. Engleheart, unconsciously; 'do I hear you right? The young man who brings his suit to my niece Esther is of family, you say?'

'Yes, mother; yes, of course,' answered Joan, sharply; 'he comes of honourable ancestors like our—'

selves. I am thankful,' she went on, turning to David, 'thankful that the lad is but a farmer's son, and that Esther will have honest plenty instead of starving gentility for her portion.'

'If she marries him, Joan. We do take things so much for granted.'

'We take things as we wish them to be, very often,' answered Miss Engleheart. 'I wish to see Esther happily settled; and you, David, seem to have some unaccountable desire to—'

'Hush, hush, Joan!' interrupted the poor fellow, quickly, and jumping up from his chair to hide his confusion. 'Here is Esther herself, come home at last—and alone.'

'Carew having parted from her at the gate, Cousin David. Esther would not walk by herself alone on the moors at such an hour—would you, Esther?' to the girl, who, silent and shy, now stood at the door. 'You have not been walking abroad with no one with you between nine and ten o'clock at night.'

'Mr. Carew was with me, Joan,' she answered, resolutely, but still with a tremor in her voice; 'he met me far away on the moor and— and walked home with me.'

'Come in, child, and lay your hat down. You look tired,' said Joan, not unkindly. 'David, can't you move, and let her pass? She must want her supper.'

'I was going to move,' cried David, very confused and stupid. 'I was thinking—thinking Esther looked pale.'

'Which is an excellent reason for keeping her standing at the door. Mother, you are asleep in your chair. Come away to bed this moment. Mr. Engleheart'—and Joan turned to David with a smiling pleasantness that made him shudder—

'I leave you to do the honours of the supper-table to Miss Fleming. She can entertain you with an account of her long ramble with Mr. Carew.' And, seizing Mrs. Engleheart in one hand and the candlestick in the other, Joan strode out of the room, and David and Miss Fleming were left alone.

I suppose there is not one of us but can remember the hideous firm-

ness with which, in some great crisis of our life, our own right hand has probed the wound that lay all bare and quivering not an hour before. How we have felt a fierce kind of pleasure in each self-inflicted pang; have called that heroism to ourselves which was, in truth, but the last spasmodic struggle of some hope not utterly dead. Such firmness did David Engleheart, the least heroic of human creatures, feel when he was left alone with Esther, now. He knew, far better than Miss Joan, the state of the girl's heart. At this moment something, not of innocence, not, certainly, of beauty, yet *something* gone from out her face told him how irrevocably all that he had once so coveted to possess was robbed from him. The broad soft brow, the delicate scarlet lips that he had bowed down before as a poor priest bows down before his image of the Madonna, were his, even for worship, no longer: they were Mr. Carew's. He knew it from her cast-down eyes, her uncertain speech, the hurried way in which her hand trifled amidst some wild flowers that she had laid beside her on the table; all the alphabet out of which jealousy can so quickly spell the miserable truth of its own fears. Carew had spoken to her of love!

As I have said, the strength that comes to many a passion in *extremis* came to David Engleheart now. He found himself able to jest with Esther upon her late return. He asked what she and Mr. Carew could possibly find to say to each other during so many hours? Had the lad really anything in him on further acquaintance? He seemed not to have too much to say for himself on that evening that he spent at Countisbury. Esther parried these little thrusts as she best might, and with some latent surprise at the quarter from whence they came; for David had never before, of his own free-will, so much as mentioned Oliver's name before her. But the sense of her strange, new-found happiness made her in these early moments shy and embarrassed even with him; and she was conscious, for the first time in her life,



Drawn by M. Ellen Edwards.

POOR DAVID !

See "The Ordeal for Women."



Drawn by M. W. H. H. H.

POOR DAVID!

See "The Ordeal by Fire"

of relief when Miss Joan's sharp knock upon the bedroom floor overhead summoned her away.

'I have something I wish to tell you, David,' but she said this without looking at him, and her hand shook a little as she took up her candle from the table.

'It must be told quickly then, Esther. Judging from our cousin's footstep she is in one of her little tempers already.'

'Not to-night; not to-night, David, dear. To-morrow is Barnstaple fair, you know; Joan will be away all day. I will tell you then. It's a secret that only you are to be told as yet—a secret that concerns me very nearly.' And then she threw her arms round his neck, as she had done every night these dozen years; and running lightly from the room and up the narrow stair, left him silently gazing after her in the darkness.

And Patty coming in to clear the supper a while later, found him standing there still, and—which roused Patty's softer feelings yet more—never a book in his hand. She remembered how she used to stand idling about in the dark at the cruel time when Joan had broken for her with William Tillyer. 'Am I to let Miss Esther's flowers bide, Master David? they be main withered already.'

'Let them stay so, Patty; let them stay so,' answered David, gently. 'I will put them in water for Miss Esther myself. And, Patty, don't wait up for me. I am going out to smoke my pipe, and I'll be sure to see that all the doors are locked before I go to bed.'

Long after midnight Miss Joan from her maiden-bower watched the glow of David's pipe, as he passed restlessly up and down the garden-path beneath her window. 'Smoke away, smoke away, David Engleheart,' she soliloquized, with many an emphatic nod of her gaunt head towards the unhappy object of her regard. 'Put all your loves and hopes and follies in that pipe, and burn them up for ever. So; one is not enough. Fill another, cousin, fill another. I have given you food enough for fifty pipes to-night!'

The sound of his hurried steps fell on her ears still, when, wearied out with watching him, she betook herself to bed. They lulled her pleasantly to sleep.

CHAPTER X.

POOR DAVID!

The next day dawned, sultry and glowing, as few days, even in July, ever dawn upon the misty moorland heights of North Devonshire. Quite early in the morning Miss Joan had started by the market-coach to Barnstaple, and, as was usual in her absence, a strange calm and peace seemed to hang over all the little household at Countisbury. Poor Patty sang over her unmolested work; old Mrs. Engleheart, untroubled either by book or knitting, basked in the warm sun at the parlour window; Fanner Vellicot's pigeons picked out the green currants and gooseberries as they listed; Miss Joan's own great Cochins China fowls walked with a reprobate air of perfect assurance and coolness about the garden-paths.

'I think we are rather unprincipled to encourage these revolutionary movements, David,' said Esther, as they paced slowly up and down the terrace in the early morning sun. 'What would Joan say if she saw all her creatures at this moment?'

'Poor wretches, let them have one happy day,' answered David. 'Tis only twice a year that any of us are free, and what a freedom it is! Why, the very air is more genial than at any other time. Esther, turn your face to the east, and feel if it is not.'

'It's a lovely morning, David; this promises to be the first really hot summer's day that we have had.'

'How much of it shall you spend at home, child? how many hours will Mr. Carew spare you to me, I wonder?'

'David,' said the girl, laying her hand quickly upon his arm, 'don't talk like that about—about Mr. Carew any more, please. It is a jest no longer.'

'Ah!'

'I should have spoken to you last night if I could; but somehow, David, it was too difficult then, and I always feel when Joan is in the house as though she can hear me even when she is in another room. But now I feel I can tell you all.'

'I am glad you receive me into your confidence, Esther.'

'Well, I ought to tell Joan first I believe, David; but it is so difficult to tell her anything one cares much about— isn't it?'

'Very.'

'She is so matter-of-fact and hard—so unlike you, Cousin David. David—he felt her hand trembling on his arm—'can you guess my secret?'

'I am ill at guessing, Esther.'

'Mr. Carew has asked me to marry him, cousin,' and she looked up with her honest eyes straight into his. 'I am so happy.'

'You have known him a short time,' said David, and she was too deeply moved herself to note the tremor in his voice. 'Your acquaintance, I think, dates from one fortnight ago.'

'A fortnight and three days, David; but then I have seen him so often.'

'And must know so much of his character and worth—this stranger for whom you are willing to give us all up! We have loved you a dozen years, and he a dozen days, Esther. Well, it is natural.'

'David!'

He softened in a moment at the loving tone of that one word. 'I don't blame you, Esther. You are acting as every young woman has acted since the world began—rightly, no doubt, and as Providence meant you to do, only—only don't you see 'tis hard to part from you? I have but one thing on the earth to love, and it's hard to lose it.'

'And you will not lose me, David,' she cried, eagerly, 'not for years and years. We are both very young, and Oliver is only starting in his profession. It is not a question of losing me now—merely of letting me give him my promise, David.'

'You have waited to consult me before doing so, then?'

'No, cousin. Last evening, when Mr. Carew asked me if I could ever like him well enough to be his wife, I said yes. I was obliged to tell the truth, you know; and I am quite sure—I mean I think I am quite sure—that I shall never like any one but Mr. Carew while I live. But I could not feel happy in my promise, Cousin David, unless I had spoken of it to you, and unless you said that you really approved of my choice.'

'And you will abide by my decision?'

'David, that's not quite a fair thing to say. I should be very miserable if you refused to consent to my engagement; but I feel that I ought to be truer to Oliver Carew now than to any one—yes, even to you. Oh, Cousin David, be friends with him, and try to like him a little for my sake.'

The expression of her pleading face stabbed David to the heart.

'I am not at all a fitting person to consult, Esther; Joan and her mother are your guardians; I am nothing to you.'

He moved as though he would have turned away from her; but Esther's kindly hand caught his arm tight. 'David, dear David, nothing to me? I thought you cared for me—I thought—'

She could get no further; her voice choked, the great tears struggled to her eyes. For a moment David Engleheart stood irresolute; then he turned round quickly, stooped, and kissed her lips. 'You thought of me as of your good stupid brother, Esther; no, too old for that; your uncouth, ugly old bear of a playmate, old and grey and dull enough to be your grandfather, who has just had a dozen years or so of his life made bright by a child's loving face, and now will not hesitate to give his darling (though with some natural pang) to the first young and handsome stranger who chances to have won her heart? That was it, Esther.'

'Oh, David! how can you speak so of yourself?' But she was pale no longer, and he could see a smile coming round her lips.

'And you were right, my darling;

that is what I have always been to you, what I am now. All this has come upon us rather suddenly, Esther, you see. You are only just eighteen. I thought I had a great many more years' safe possession of you yet. However, it has come, and I am glad of it, for your sake, my poor little fatherless Esther! May Carew love you, and be faithful to you as you deserve!

David's vacant face glowed till he looked positively handsome; the thrill at his own heart went far to reward him for all the anguish of the last fortnight. Poor David! not Philip or Alexander ever gained a greater victory than was this to him.

'I have been quite afraid of you lately, cousin,' remarked Esther, presently, and when they had taken one or two turns upon the terrace in silence. 'You have been so constrained and odd with us all that I began really to think something was going on that displeased you, and so did Joan.'

'Oh!'

'She even hinted to me, occasionally, that you did not approve of Oliver's walking with me, and I was wondering this morning whether there could possibly be any truth in it, when—ah, you kind old David!—Patty told me of your putting my flowers in water for me last night, and then I knew you could not be really angry.'

'I have never been angry with you since the day you came to us, child.'

'Twelve years ago, isn't it, David?'

'Fourteen years this autumn. You were a little soft-eyed child, dressed in black, and with a slow melancholy way of speaking and looking straight up in one's face. Esther, you crept into my heart at once, and have forgotten to leave it since.'

'I have never forgotten the first night that I came, David. You took me on your knee and made shadows on the parlour wall for me all the evening, and then carried me up to bed, in spite of Joan's saying I mustn't be treated like a baby.'

'And you held me close (a vast

deal closer than you would hold me now, Miss Fleming), and said you never meant to go away from me again. Do you remember that?'

'Yes, I remember,' said Esther, laughing, 'and as yet I have not broken my word. Very likely I shall stay at Countisbury till you have had quite enough of me, after all. Joan was talking to me very seriously the other evening of the lot that awaits me when I shall be an elderly woman of eight-and-thirty—twenty years hence. Oh, David!' she broke off abruptly, 'what sane human being would look for twenty years, or look forward at all, on such a morning as this? Even to feel the air blow on one's face is enough to make one in love with the present and with life.'

'Let us come away to the thorn tree and our books, Esther, and enjoy our one day of liberty thoroughly. The sun is too hot here—that is,'—he corrected himself quickly—'if Miss Fleming has no prior engagement elsewhere.'

'Miss Fleming has no engagement whatever until five o'clock this afternoon, cousin.'

'And then?'

'And then is to meet Mr. Carew upon the moor, and take her cousin with her, if he will condescend to come. You see everything is settled for you,' she added, turning to him with her fond smile as they walked slowly towards the house: 'even if you had wished to be a stern, implacable relation, we would not have let you carry out your own intentions. There is only one character in the world fitted for my cousin David—the one he filled on that first evening that I ever saw him, thirteen years ago.'

'When he held you in his arms, and had you for his own,' thought poor David, as his hungering eyes took in all the beauty of her up-turned face. 'Ah, if shadows on the wall could make you happy now!'

But he had sense enough, poor wretch, not to put his thoughts into words; and with lingering steps, and Esther singing as she went, they passed along the shaded garden-path towards the house.

CHAPTER XI.

OLIVER AS A HERO.

Patty met them at the threshold of the house-place, and put a note into Esther's hand. Mr. Carew had given it her a minute ago as she was standing at the orchard gate. He had gone down along the path towards the Riven Oak very quick, and had waited for no answer.

Esther glanced over the three lines that the note contained, and her heart turned sick. 'I can't read with you as I promised—I can't stay with you to-day, David; I am going out at once.'

'Is there anything wrong, child? can I help you?' David asked, as he followed her back into the garden. 'Shall I take any answer from you to Mr. Carew?'

'There is no answer wanted. His regiment is ordered suddenly away. He is going to leave Lynmouth.'

'When?'

'To-day; in a few hours. Tell Aunt Engleheart not to wait for me, please. I don't know when I shall be back.'

'Mr. Carew going?—child, shall I walk any of the way with you?'

'No, no, no! Oh! David, I can't talk even to you. This is harder than I can bear.' And very quick and resolute, as had been her wont from a child when anything moved her strongly, she passed out through the wicket-gate into the orchard, and left David Engleheart standing, helplessly bewildered, and alone.

Oliver Carew going to-day—in a few hours! What was David's sympathy, what was David's existence to her now? What should she remember of the wistful, kindly face looking after her as she went, or of anything in the whole universe, save the one cruel fact of Oliver's leaving? Since last night all her world—never very wide before—had narrowed into one desire—Oliver's presence, the flattery of Oliver's eyes—and he was going. It was the first time in her life that anything approaching to a real blow had fallen upon her, and, as she had said to David, it was harder than

she could bear. So she never tried to strengthen herself by reasoning on her misery, by thinking how many hundreds of lovers part and meet and part again without dying, or how likely it was that Mr. Carew might have got a summons to return to his regiment, and would yet be back with her again in a month or two. She just felt (as a good many of us have felt at Esther Fleming's age) that a crueller fate had come to her than she could by possibility live through; succumbed to her first trial much as she would have done if no Joan Engleheart had ever trained her to strength of mind and self-reliance; walked white and trembling and broken-hearted along the path where Oliver in his note had asked her to meet him; and when an abrupt turning in the woods brought him suddenly to her side, held both her hands out in all simplicity to meet him, and burst into tears.

'You are going! Oliver, you are going to leave me!'

Last night she had been shy and stately even after she had accepted his suit; but all restraint, all girlish pride, was swept away from her heart now. She dared be the first to speak; she dared let him see the full extent of her love—for she was to lose him.

'It is very sudden, Esther, but when you know what it is that calls me, you will see that I must go.'

'Not to-day?'

'Yes, to-day; in a few hours. Be strong for my sake, Esther. Don't look so white and piteous, or I can never bear to leave you.'

Mr. Carew, as I have before remarked, was accustomed to a very different walk of life to Esther's; a walk where sudden and startling emotions do not so much obtain as among the middle classes of humble country people. He had often seen young women faint in crowded assemblies, had witnessed, perhaps, some scenes of another class, in which tears had been called in as an effective auxiliary weapon. He had never seen anything at all like this stricken childish face, with its passion of sudden grief, and I think it frightened him a little. He was as

much in love with Esther as it was in his nature to be; but, really, if love at its onset entailed such dreadfully violent scenes as these, love must be a much less pleasant thing than he had taken it for.

'You will listen to reason, Esther, will you not? You won't look so miserable when you hear that it is absolutely, imperatively necessary for me to go?'

'No, Oliver' (the unerring tact of her sex telling her, not exactly what he had thought, but what he would best like her to do)—'no, Oliver, I will try all I can not to look miserable any more.' And then she did try hard to keep her lips from quivering, and stammered something about the note having been given to her too suddenly, and how she had run very fast through the heat, and she was a little sick and faint, she thought, and—and all this foolishness would be over directly.

'Sit down by me here, and recover yourself, you poor little silly Esther,' cried Oliver, drawing her kindly to his side. 'Why, your hands are as cold as ice! How will you ever do for a soldier's wife, if you are so sensitive, my foolish child?'

As the colour came back into her face he began to remember how wonderfully handsome she was, and how much she loved him, poor thing! After all, this sudden parting was very hard: it overcame him with quite a thrill of pain to think that months, that years might pass before his lips should touch that fair young cheek again; and so he told her, in language you and I, reader, would not think surpassingly eloquent, but which was to Esther the sweetest and finest music she had ever heard.

'I thought, for a minute, you did not feel it as much as I did,' she said, presently. 'When I came up first you looked as calm and indifferent as though nothing had happened.'

'Do you think so now?'

'Oh, no, no, no!' with all the bright blood in her face. 'I know now you would not go unless you were obliged.'

'And can you guess what it

is that really forces me to leave—the only thing in the world that could make me go away from you like this?'

'You are going back to the army, I suppose.' Esther's ideas of military obligations were somewhat vague and superficial. 'Your colonel won't allow you to stay away any longer.'

'Esther, my regiment goes abroad the day, after to-morrow, and I go with it.'

'Abroad? not, not'—the whiteness spread around her mouth again in an instant—'not to India, Oliver?' (This was at the time when the news of mutiny had just reached home.) 'Say only that you are not ordered to India.'

'We are ordered to Malta first, Esther,' Carew answered quietly.

'And then?'

'Then, of course, we shall wait for further orders.'

'Oliver'—and she caught hold of his hand in both of hers—'tell me the truth, please. I can bear that far better than any preparation. Shall you be sent to India?'

'I hope so, Esther.'

'Ah! I understand.'

'You promised to be strong,' he whispered, drawing her closer to his side; 'and you give way again already. I am not in India yet, remember. I may not go there at all if the rebellion is put down quicker than we think for.'

'But you hope to go! That is the cruellest to me.'

'Esther, should you love me better if I did not?'

She was silent. She only clasped his hands closer; looked up intently with her great imploring eyes into his face.

'Should you love me better if I had not the feelings of every other man in England? if I did not long for my own personal share in dealing out judgment upon those cowardly wretches who have betrayed us?'

'Oh, Oliver!'

'Esther'—and here Carew really spoke with emotion—'God knows that I love you truly—better far than I ever thought myself that I could love. Let me feel that my

engagement to you, instead of making me weaker, will strengthen and help me in my duty; that—that—I can't well express what I mean,' and, indeed, the lad's voice was choked with his own earnestness; 'but what I want to say is, that you should let me go away from you full of hope and spirit, and not thinking of your poor miserable face here at home.'

'Oliver, don't reason with me—I can't help feeling as I do!' And then, as a child checked from its sorrow for a moment, goes back, with sudden passion, to its first plaint, she burst almost wildly into tears, and hid her face down on his breast.

If she had never really loved him before; if she had mistaken emotions roused by a handsome face and pleading voice and sunset walks, and her own first girlish pleasure in being admired; if she had blindly received all this counterfeit for the true coin hitherto, in these moments of parting she was, at least, not mistaken. She loved him now. When women waved their handkerchiefs and wept over the Guards on that dull autumn day when they marched through the streets of London before they left for the Crimea; when women wept over the shattered few—the gaunt wan heroes' faces which another year brought back to them—they were under just the same influence which rent this poor little country girl's heart now; about the strongest emotion (save one) that women's hearts are capable of, and one simulating genuine passion so well that with the breast tightening under its direct influence, the hands clasped warmly in the parting hero's own, it would require a much cooler and more impartial analyst than poor Esther to determine the actual ingredients of which it is made up. She loved him; she was quite sure of that; and he was leaving her—he was going away to die for his country—and she was to remain here with half the world between them in this dull, silent old home of hers in Countisbury. The realities of the case; balls at Malta, flirtations in Bombay, probability,

almost certainty, of the mutiny being over before Mr. Carew reached India; the necessity of putting their engagement upon some tangible and business-like footing; all these things, which to a Dashwood at seventeen would have occurred as a matter of course, never entered into Esther's brain. She had already done a great deal for Mr. Carew by the help of her own imagination; had put a great deal of purple and fine linen upon him out of the treasury of her own vivid fancy; now, chance effected the finishing stroke to the ideal she had all along been creating. She saw him as a hero. Yes, if she had not really loved him before she loved him now; and Oliver felt it. Perhaps, little as Esther could have believed it then, he was more in earnest than she was, when, clasping her in his arms, he swore to be true to her till death; that, as she was his first, she should be his last love; and that neither time, nor distance, nor any change, save in herself, should efface her from his heart.

'And I? Ah, Oliver! you will have plenty of things to think of and to do; but I—you will write to me very often, won't you?'

'Of course. I am a horrid letter-writer in general, but you'll not mind that, Esther.'

'As if your letters could be horrid to me!'

'And you must answer them regularly, not crossed, if you can help it, and tell me all that you are doing, you know.'

'I shall be doing nothing. I shall tell you all I feel.'

'Oh, yes—' Mr. Carew had a vague feeling that such letters could not be very long, and I think he was relieved. Long letters required long answers; and, as an Eton boy should, he had dreadful misgivings as to his own spelling and general diction. This sort of thing, under the shade of a sycamore, was easy enough, or in a ball-room, or at archery fêtes, or even on lonely moonlit moors;—but letters! 'Whether I write or not, Esther, and whether my letters express it or not, remember that I love you, that I shall never love any one again as I

do you, and now—now Esther, my own dear love, I must leave you indeed.'

It was five minutes longer before they parted, and at the end of that time Esther had not spoken one word about their engagement and the footing on which it should be placed; neither had it entered Carew's mind to disclose the truth concerning his own future position, which, with a boy's foolishness, he had till now kept from her. I don't think a dozen words that could be reduced to typography had passed between them, at all, during these minutes. They held each other's hands; they looked, as eyes under twenty-two do look, when their possessors believe that they love and know that they must part; and then, then, Esther stood alone under the shadow of the sycamore and knew that the first act of her life was over for ever. Play such a part again in sober earnest! look back upon this as on a rehearsal—as Rachel or Talma might have looked back to the first crude awakening of their powers—as the maestro looks back from his glorious Mass in C to the first vague dream which foreshadowed it in his youth!—when did such heresy (such truth) ever enter a heart as honest, and as ignorant of itself, as was Esther Fleming's at scarce eighteen!

CHAPTER XII.

MISS JOAN EVINCES HER STRENGTH OF MIND.

Is love, in the majority of cases, strengthened or weakened by the absence of its object? A great authority, and one prone to terrible truth in such matters, tells us that for the malady of love there is one humiliating but almost specific cure—absence. Another, and a philosopher, lays down as an axiom that the sentiment is strongest, the passion weakest in the absence of the beloved object. Passing over all pretty little poetic platitudes about the purifying effect of time and distance upon the affections, I think we may conclude that not

absence, but the application of other stimulus, cures: that not the mere fact of being left, but being left alone, fosters love and keeps it alive. 'L'homme a sa force et l'exercice de sa puissance: il agit, il va, il s'occupe, il pense, il embrasse l'avenir et y trouve des consolations. La femme demeure; elle reste face à face avec le chagrin dont rien ne la distrait; elle descend jusqu'au fond de l'abîme qu'il a ouvert, le mesure et souvent le comble de ses vœux et des larmes.'

Mr. Carew in four-and-twenty hours was with his regiment on its way to the East; Esther, alone and unoccupied, was dreaming of him among the lonely silence of the Countisbury hills. Could absence under such opposing circumstances by any possibility bring about a precisely similar form of result?

One thing it undoubtedly did for Esther Fleming's love: it idealized it marvellously. It was not easy to be very poetic about Mr. Carew, however much you adored him, in his presence. His handsome, boyish, sunburnt face was one you could not be sentimental about if you would; his constant flow of animal spirits, his hearty ringing laugh, were all things that set romance at defiance. But away; gone to that far post of danger from whence she should possibly never see the brave young face return; Esther could dream him into a position much nearer her own ideal than he had ever come in reality. If the feeling had dimly struggled up in her mind at times, during their three weeks' friendship, that she was, in truth, Carew's superior; that there were thoughts of hers, girl though she was, to which he could never reach, feelings he could never share, she was too innately generous for such convictions to trouble her in his absence now. She remembered his tender words, his manly tender words of love for her, not those little occasional tokens of mental inferiority which had made the blood start with such a sense of uneasy shame into her face when they were together. 'What does intellect matter?' she questioned herself once, once only—and this was

after she had been made censorious by some rather curious grammar in Mr. Carew's first letter—'Should I prefer some conceited clever gentleman, who could write me pretty verses and think of nothing but his own ability, to the simple, manly heart that is mine so entirely?'

And then Mr. Carew's letter, of course, went through quite an ovation of remorseful tenderness. It would have been more truthful to say, 'Should I prefer a man who could be brave and handsome, and yet write grammatically, and possess at least as much brains as myself into the bargain?' But Esther did not want to be truthful; she wanted to make out the strongest possible case in favour of the man she had promised to love; and aided by her imagination, and still more, as I have said, by the happy chance of her lover's absence, she succeeded in doing so.

Indeed, this letter, after her first disappointment as to its ability had past, was a strong tie that bound her afresh to Oliver. A very young woman always believes she finds some new clue to the character of the man who loves her in the first letter she receives from his hand. Those words, 'my promised wife,' 'your attached till death,' and others of a like kind which occurred several times in it, appealed to all that was deepest in Esther's heart. Now that she saw these things written she felt how solemn the tie was that held her to Oliver, how sacred were the promises she had tacitly taken upon herself. She began to think, not so much of the handsome lad she had known for three weeks among the moors, as of the man who called her his promised wife, and who wrote himself hers until death. And it is always a gain for a commonplace lover when he begins to lose his individuality!

Esther had long held opinions of her own as to what should constitute the character of a man she could love; and as soon as Oliver, by dint of absence and imagination, was placed on the throne of this visionary ideal, the girl's memory clung to him with passion—passion

of which she had not experienced the slightest, the most passing throb in his presence. She made pilgrimages to all the places where they had been together. She found, or thought she found, the exact spot where Oliver Carew first spoke to her of love, gathered up some withered petals of the wild roses on the bank, and wore them next her heart in a little locket—from whence she was first obliged to dispossess a lock of poor David Engleheart's grizzled hair. She liked more than ever to spend her evenings in the house place, the only room in the house that had known Oliver's presence, and to dream, sitting there in the spot she had sat by him, that she could still see his handsome face shining on her in the golden light. Even to walk down to the hotel where he had lodged and look up, shy and blushing, to the window where he used to stand, made her pulses thrill strangely. To walk alone and think of him among the odorous lanes at night took her into a world of passion more subtle and delicious than any to which word or look of Mr. Carew's had had power to transport her when she was with him.

'I thought you would have pined a little for the knight who loved and who rode away,' said Joan, spitefully, to her once; 'and instead of that you look better and happier than ever. I am glad to see you are so tough-hearted, Esther, after all the nonsense David has talked since you were four years old about your sensitiveness and your warm affections and your painful depths of feeling.'

'Why should I grieve for Mr. Carew?' said Esther, rather hypocritically. 'Surely, Joan, you would not have me break my heart for every well-looking stranger one chances to meet upon our moors? If Mr. Carew liked to ride away, I am sure it is much better that I shouldn't trouble my head any more about him.'

Partly because he had himself desired that their engagement should be secret, and partly influenced by her own vague terror of Joan's tender mercies towards all lovers,

Esther had told Oliver to send her letters under cover to poor David. Miss Engleheart's suspicions as to the existence of any positive engagement were, therefore, suspicions only. But she had sufficiently sharp intuitions, even in love matters, to tell her that Esther's placid face, after the terrible paleness of the first two days passed off, betokened confidence at least in Carew's good faith; and the extreme lowness of David's spirits, and the visible change in his demeanour towards Esther, strengthened her in her belief that not only was the girl's heart won, but that David himself was perfectly conscious of the desperate folly of his own long-cherished dreams.

This was precisely the state of things at which Miss Joan had desired to arrive; and for several weeks after Oliver's departure she was unusually lenient in her conduct to Esther, never questioning her as to her lonely musings on the garden terrace or the moors, or the absent and distracted way in which she went through the daily routine of her work at home. But when, gradually, David began, as of old, to be the girl's companion; when, instead of Esther sitting alone in the starlight on the terrace, David got back to her side as he had used to do before Carew ever came; when long conversations and lingering walks and evening readings became once more the staple of David Engleheart's life, Miss Joan's milder feelings underwent a sudden and sharp revulsion. Esther was making David her confidant; it was not for him but for Oliver that the girl's face flushed up as she talked to him. David, poor fool! was listening for another to all the tender nonsense he had coveted to hear at first-hand, and would end by becoming more hopelessly besotted by his ridiculous passion than ever: perhaps, if Carew did prove false, would end by winning Esther, not to love him—Joan never thought that—but to accept his honest love and ugly face in exchange for the false fair stranger she had failed to win.

With Joan to think was to act.

She did not confine herself to acrimonious playfulness with Esther and scarcely-veiled contempt for the besotted fool David; she resolved to part them. Mrs. Tudor had already invited Esther to spend some months of the coming winter with her in Bath; and so, without any discussion of the matter even with her mother, Joan wrote and proposed to her aunt that Esther should join her at once at the seaside. 'Her visit will, of course, be for three months, as you proposed,' Miss Engleheart wrote; 'and if a month of it is spent at the seaside with you now she must return to us one month earlier in the spring. The change to a gay watering-place will be a treat to the girl after her life here, and I will pay her travelling expenses from Weymouth to Bath.'

Mrs. Tudor was not unfrequently amiable when it involved no difficulty of any kind to herself to be so. After all, she wanted the girl more in her seaside lodgings than at Bath. She could go to market instead of Wilson; she could carry her air-cushion to the beach; she could play piquet on an evening. The two first offices Mistress Wilson—Aunt Tudor's own maid—performed with exceeding sulkiness (and all demonstrations of nerves on the part of Wilson made Mrs. Tudor miserable; where should she find such an inestimable, faithful creature, one so versed in wigs and dyes and paint and scandals, at only twenty-five pounds a year again?): for cards—and cards in some shape, even without playing for money, were a necessary aliment to Aunt Tudor's life—she was reduced to the doctor's wife when, with professional kindness, that lady would come and sit with her an hour or two of an evening. Yes, Esther would be a decided relief. Mrs. Tudor wrote back quite an affectionate response to her niece's appeal; and Joan, without any note of warning or preparation, announced to Esther at once that she should pack up her things and start.

It was a moment of triumphant glory to Miss Engleheart when she

broke out with the sudden news to David. He was sitting in his little sanctum in the sinking autumn evening with Esther; the futile pretext of tying flies to occupy his hands, but his eyes—those great foolish eyes of his, as Joan would call them, under the evil influence that possessed her! those foolish, and not at all handsome eyes of his, fixed with their accustomed mute adoration upon his companion's face. Esther had not, as you know, one particle of a coquette in her nature; and of all living creatures she would least have led astray poor simple, trusting David. But it is difficult to speak of the thing nearest one's heart without some unconscious softening of the voice; to speak of love and of a distant lover without some of the incense originally meant for the object of supreme worship shedding its dangerous sweetness upon the senses of the unhappy neophyte who is humbly playing his little part of assisting at the altar. Esther was thinking wholly of Oliver, and not one whit of David, as, blushing and eager, she knelt by his side and repeated to him some solemn unimportant bit of intelligence out of Carew's last letter; but I must confess there was enough in the beauty of her flushed face, in the childish grace of her familiar attitude; enough in the unconscious charm of her perfect confidence and the guilty start of poor David on suddenly hearing Joan's vicious snap at the handle of the door, to justify all that lady's preconceived visions as to the peril of this prolonged and unchecked intimacy.

'Esther, you will go to Aunt Tudor to-morrow morning.'

'Cousin——?'

'She is at the seaside, and wants you. Shall Patty iron out your lilac muslin, or will you travel in one of your cottons?'

'Oh, Joan!'

'Make up your mind quick. I am going to pack your things.'

'But, Joan, it is very sudden.'

The wrench of parting from Countisbury, from all that remained to her of Oliver, made Esther's voice choke; as to David, he sat

simply speechless and stupefied, unconscious what further vials of wrath Joan might be about to pour upon his head. Just when he was beginning to get a little happy again, to have at least two or three hours of daily confidences from Esther—you must remember there *are* human beings, even men, who would rather be the confidant of a passion than go for nothing in it, would rather be talked to about another lover than not hear any mention of love at all—for this woman's inexorable sharpness to have dragged his poor secrets to light again, and for her to be avenged upon him thus! He could scarce have felt more hopelessly miserable had she said, 'David Engleheart, you will marry me to-morrow morning.' Indeed, I almost think, of the two, it would have crushed him less: provided, always, that Esther might have been present at the wedding.

'You will start, by the coach, at five to-morrow morning, and get to Weymouth in time for a late tea;' Joan's voice sounded quite genial and good-humoured. 'Nothing pleases Aunt Thalia more than to find people don't want to eat, so I'll put you up some hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches for the journey. What are you looking so odd for, child? I thought it would be a treat for you to get away a month or two sooner from home, and see a little gaiety at a place like Weymouth.'

'I like home better than Aunt Tudor, Joan. I don't care about gaieties at all; and if you please I will write myself and tell her so!' Her voice broke again.

Miss Joan seated herself with that peculiar angular sharpness that always betokened the advent of a few forcible opinions, and looked straight into David Engleheart's face. 'David, shall I tell you what ails the girl?' she remarked with perfect callousness to her victim's nervous writhes and deprecating gestures. 'Shall I tell you what ails our little Esther?'

'Joan, if you please, I would rather——'

'Our little Esther fancies herself in love with Mr. Oliver Carew.'

There was an awfully-guilty silence. Esther turned her hot face away towards the window; David caught himself fast by the cuff of his sleeve in one of his own fish-hooks, and blushed like a girl.

'In love with Mr. Oliver Carew. I don't say that she has made any confidences on the subject to you, whatever I may think'—dire visions of lonely days to come rose before David at the emphasis of that one word—'but I am just going to tell you both the result of such dreams on a girl like Esther. You are not really in love with the man, child.' Esther turned round quickly, and with an indignant denial half bursting from her lips. 'If you were, I should speak differently. You think you care for him wonderfully because he's the first man you have ever spoken to; and if you were to go on dreaming and loitering away your life, and reading sentimental poetry, and making confidences with David here, you might become so in truth. What is the result? You will have to battle with life, will enter upon it weary-hearted, dull, spiritless—all that young women are who have gone through the disappointment of a first foolish passion.'

'But, Joan—'

'I know what you would say, Esther, that Carew may return and hold to whatever idle word now stands between you. I hope; he will do so, if he is a man of honourable feeling and has sufficient money to maintain you. But your remaining fooling away your time here at Countisbury can have no influence, that I know of, over the young man's fidelity. He has gone to Malta; you say he is to go to India. Well, India is a great way off, and a great many things may happen there.'

'Oh, cousin!'

'I am not thinking of death, my dear. Mr. Carew did not look to me at all like one of those whom the gods love. I am thinking of all the temptation to change which must beset a young, light-hearted, and, I should say, not over strong-headed lad like this abroad. A lad, moreover, who is only bound by

the most flimsy and nominal engagement to any one at home.'

Esther's eyes glowed with a fire that Joan understood thoroughly; but the poor child was forced either to be silent or to betray her own secret; and so Miss Engleheart stood master of the field. David, paralyzed, as usual, by the suddenness of the onset, had never attempted to speak since Joan entered the room. As he listened to her opinion of the likely stability of Esther's love it did occur to him too that his cousin's decisions, harsh and unfeeling though they seemed, were not altogether irrational. If the girl's absence from Countisbury were, in truth, to uproot her fancy for Oliver, David felt that he could bring himself to bear it, even though he had, single-handed, to parry his cousin's attentions till her return.

Joan read something of what was passing through his mind upon his face. 'I really think you might try to open your lips, David,' she cried harshly. 'It does look so foolish for you, a man forty-two years of age, to sit blushing and fidgeting like a school-girl when these things are talked of. Do you, or do you not, think that Esther should waste her life among us old people, and dreaming dreams of folly, when she has a chance of mixing with the world and improving herself? Have the goodness, for once, to give a straight-forward opinion.'

'I—I don't think Esther ought to offend Mrs. Tudor,' said David; but he felt the baseness of his own motives too keenly to look in Esther's eyes as he spoke. 'You might have planned her visit less suddenly, Joan, but I can't be so selfish as to wish her not to go.'

'Do you hear David's opinion, Esther?'

'Yes, Joan, I hear.'

'And what decision are you coming to, may I ask? If you are going to write to Aunt Tudor you must set about it at once.'

'I am not going to write to Aunt Tudor,' said Esther, deliberately. 'Your advice, both of you, is so exceedingly sensible that I have no choice but to abide by it.'

'And you will travel in your lilac muslin?'

'If you please.'

'Aunt Tudor would be sure to make some unpleasant remark if you arrived in cotton, and, as you've worn it already, you may as well travel in your muslin as in another. Lend me your watch, David, if you please. I must go and see to the hard-boiled eggs at once.'

'Poor David is fast bound,' said Esther, coming up kindly to his side. 'Cousin, what in the world have you been doing with your flies? All our beautiful green drakes and hackles wound up into a tight little ball, and two hooks imbedded fast in your sleeve! Oh, you absent old David!'

'I was not absent, child,' he whispered, when Miss Joan had left them. 'I was'—David did not tell stories well—'I was feeling for you, Esther. It must be a grief to you to leave all the places that remind you of your short happiness.'

'And yet you advised me to go.'

'I couldn't find it in my conscience to say that you should run any risk of offending Mrs. Tudor; besides, it is better for you to have change and occupation than remain here.'

'Yes, I know it. Oliver would say so too: that is why I have brought myself to go so suddenly. He may be away for years. I must do other things than dream and regret and look back during all that time. I must improve myself, and see more of life, and grow wiser and stronger for his sake.'

'Yes.'

'And, you know, David,' (she said this with exceeding deliberation and certainty), 'it is childish in the extreme to care so much for places: no change of scene or people can really have any influence on one's feelings when they are very true and deep like mine. Oliver will be quite as much with me wherever I go as he is here at Countisbury.'

And quite late that night, when Miss Joan had released her from her packing, and when all the house was still, Esther stole away through the dim woods to the foot of that sycamore where she had parted from Carew, and cried beneath it, and apostrophized it, and, I think, pressed her lips upon its bark with warmth much more creditable to her eighteen years than to her philosophy.

'My love is only a foolish dream that time will wake me from! Change of scene will bring me to be untrue to one word that I have promised! Oh, Oliver! are you thinking of me now? Oliver, I never knew before how much I loved you!'

At that particular moment Mr. Carew was looking in the face of the prettiest girl in Valetta, and assuring her that he had never before danced with any one whose step, both in the waltz and the polka-mazurka, suited his own so exactly. To a superficial observer of human happiness it would sometimes seem rather a matter for rejoicing than regret that one half of the world can never know, with minute and circumstantial accuracy, what the other half does.



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Drawn by M. Allen Edwards.

THE DREAM BECOMES REALITY.

See "The Ordeal for Women," Chapter XIV.

